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LETTERS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

MIND,

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

I CONSIDER AN HUMAN SOUL WITHOUT EDUCATION, LIKE MARBLE IN THE QUARRY, WHICH SHEWS NONE OF ITS INHERENT BEAUTIES TILL THE SKILL OF THE POLISHER FETCHES OUT THE COLOURS, MAKES THE SURFACE SHINE, AND DISCOVERS EVERY ORNAMENTAL CLOUD, SPOT, AND VEIN THAT RUNS THROUGH THE BODY OF IT. EDUCATION, AFTER THE SAME MANNER, WHEN IT WORKS UPON A NOBLE MIND, DRAWS OUT TO VIEW EVERY LATENT VIRTUE AND PERFECTION, WHICH WITHOUT SUCH HELPS ARE NEVER ABLE TO MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE.

ADDISON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Mrs. CHAPONE.

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LETTER VI.

THE next great point of importance to your future happineſs, my dear, is what your parents have, doubtleſs, been continually attentive to form your infancy, as it is impoſſible to undertake it too early—I mean the due Regulation of your Temper. Though you are in great meaſure indebted to their forming hands for whatever is

good in it, you are ſenſible, no doubt, as every human creature is, of propenſities to ſome infirmity of temper, which it muſt now be *your own* care to correct and to ſubdue; otherwiſe the pains that have hitherto been taken with you may all become fruitleſs: and, when you are your own miſtreſs, you may relapſe into thoſe faults, which were originally in your nature, and which will require to be diligently watched and kept under, through th whole courſe of your life.

If you conſider, that the co ſtant tenor of the goſpel precep is to promote love, peace, ar

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good-will amongſt men, you will not doubt that the cultivation of an amiable diſpoſition is a great part of your religious duty; ſince nothing leads more directly to the breach of charity, and to the injury and moleſtation of our fellow creatures, than the indulgence of an ill temper. Do not therefore think lightly of the offences you may commit, for want of a due command over it, or ſuppoſe yourſelf reſponſible for them to your fellow creatures only; but, be aſſured, you muſt give a ſtrict account of them all to the Supreme Governor of the world, who has made

this a great part of your appointed trial upon earth.

A woman, bred up in a religious manner, placed above the reach of want and out of the way of ſordid or ſcandalous vices, can have but few temptations to the flagrant breach of the divine laws. It particularly concerns her therefore to underſtand them in their full import, and to conſider, how far ſhe treſpaſſes againſt them, by ſuch actions as appear trivial, when compared with murder, adultery, and theft, but which become of very great importance, by being frequently

quently repeated, and occuring in the daily tranſactions of life.

The principal virtues or vices of a woman muſt be of a private and domeſtic kind. Within the circle of her own family and dependants lies her ſphere of action — the ſcene of almoſt all thoſe taſks and trials, which muſt determine her character, and her fate, here, and hereafter. Reflect, for a moment, how much the happineſs of her huſband, children, and ſervants, muſt depend on her temper, and you will ſee that the greateſt good, or evil, which ſhe ever may have in her power to do, may ariſe

from her correcting or indulging its infirmities.

Though I wiſh the principle of duty towards God to be your ruling motive in the exerciſe of every virtue, yet, as human nature ſtands in need of all poſſible helps, let us not forget how eſſential it is to preſent happineſs, and to the enjoyment of this life, to cultivate ſuch a temper as is likewiſe indiſpenſably requiſite to the attainment of higher felicity in the life to come. The greateſt outward bleſſings cannot afford enjoyment to a mind ruffled and uneaſy within itſelf. A fit of ill humour will ſpoil the fineſt entertainment,

tertainment, and is as real a torment as the moſt painful diſeaſe. Another unavoidable conſequence of ill temper is the diſlike and averſion of all who are witneſſes to it, and, perhaps, the deep and laſting reſentment of thoſe, who ſuffer from its effects. We all, from ſocial or ſelf-love, earneſtly deſire the eſteem and affection of our fellow creatures; and indeed our condition makes them ſo neceſſary to us, that the wretch, who has forfeited them, muſt feel deſolate and undone, deprived of all the beſt enjoyments and comforts the world can afford, and given up to his inward miſery, unpitied and ſcorned.

But this never can be the fate of a good-natured perſon: whatever faults he may have, they will generally be treated with lenity; he will find an advocate in every human heart; his errors will be lamented rather than abhorred; and his virtues will be viewed in the faireſt point of light: His good humour, without the help of great talents or acquirements, will make his company preferable to that of the moſt brilliant genius, in whom this quality is wanting: in ſhort, it is almoſt impoſſible that you can be ſincerely beloved by any body, without this engaging property, whatever other excellencies you may

may poſſeſs; but, with it, you will ſcarcely fail of finding ſome friends and favourers, even though you ſhould be deſtitute of almoſt every other advantage.

Perhaps you will ſay, "all this is "very true, but our tempers are not "in our own power — we are made "with different diſpoſitions, and, if "mine is not amiable, it is rather "my unhappineſs than my fault." This, my dear, is commonly ſaid by thoſe who will not take the trouble to correct themſelves. Yet, be aſſured, it is a deluſion, and will not avail in our juſtification before him, "who knoweth "whereof we are made," and of what

what we are capable. It is true, we are not all equally happy in our diſpoſitions; but human virtue conſiſts in cheriſhing and cultivating every good inclination, and in checking and ſubduing every propenſity to evil. If you had been born with a bad temper, it might have been made a good one, at leaſt with regard to its outward effects, by education, reaſon, and principle: and, though you are ſo happy as to have a good one while young, do not ſuppoſe it wil' always continue ſo, if you negl to maintain a proper command ov it. Power, ſickneſs, diſappoir ments, or worldly cares, may cr

rupt and embitter the fineſt diſpoſition, if they are not counteracted by reaſon and religion.

It is obſerved, that every temper is inclined, in ſome degree, either to paſſion, peeviſhneſs, or obſtinacy. Many are ſo unfortunate as to be inclined to each of the three in turn: it is neceſſary therefore to watch the bent of our nature, and to apply the remedies proper for the infirmity to which we are moſt liable. With regard to the firſt, it is ſo injurious to ſociety, and ſo odious in itſelf, eſpecially in the female character, that one would think ſhame alone would

would be ſufficient to preſerve a young woman from giving way to it; for it is as unbecoming her character to be betrayed into ill behaviour by *paſſion*, as by *intoxication*, and ſhe ought to be aſhamed of the one, as much as of the other. Gentleneſs, meekneſs, and patience, are her peculiar diſtinctions, and an enraged woman is one of the moſt diſguſting ſights in nature.

It is plain, from experience, that the moſt paſſionate people can command themſelves, when they have a motive ſufficiently ſtrong — ſuch as the preſence of thoſe they fear,

or

or to whom they particularly deſire to recommend themſelves: it is therefore no excuſe to perſons, whom you have injured by unkind reproaches, and unjuſt aſperſions, to tell them you was in a paſſion: the allowing yourſelf to ſpeak to them in paſſion is a proof of an inſolent diſreſpect, which the meaneſt of your fellow creatures would have a right to reſent. When once you find yourſelf heated ſo far as to deſire to ſay what you know would be provoking and wounding to another, you ſhould immediately reſolve either to be ſilent, or to quit the room, than to give utterance to any thing dictated

tated by ſo bad an inclination. Be aſſured, you are then unfit to reaſon or to reprove, or to hear reaſon from others. It is therefore your part to retire from ſuch an occaſion of ſin; and, wait till you are cool, before you preſume to judge of what has paſſed. By accuſtoming yourſelf thus to conquer and diſappoint your anger, you will, by degrees, find it grow weak and manageable, ſo as to leave your reaſon at liberty: You will be able to reſtrain your tongue from evil, and your looks and geſtures from all expreſſions of violence and ill-will. Pride, which produces ſo many evils in the human mind, is the great

great ſource of paſſion. Whoever cultivates in himſelf a proper humility, a due ſenſe of his own faults and inſufficiencies, and a due reſpect for others, will find but ſmall temptation to violent or unreaſonable anger.

In the caſe of real injuries, which juſtify and call for reſentment, there is a noble and generous kind of anger, a proper and neceſſary part of our nature, which has nothing in it ſinful or degrading. I would not wiſh you inſenſible to this; for the perſon, who feels not an injury, muſt be incapable of being properly affected by benefits.

With thoſe, who treat you ill without provocation, you ought to maintain your own dignity. But, in order to do this, whilſt you ſhew a ſenſe of their improper behaviour, you muſt preſerve calmneſs, and even good breeding — and thereby convince them of the impotence as well as injuſtice of their malice. You muſt alſo weigh every circumſtance with candour and charity, and conſider whether your ſhewing the reſentment deſerved may not produce ill conſequences to innocent perſons— as is almoſt always the caſe in family quarrels—and whether it may not occaſion the breach of ſome duty,

or

or neceſſary connection, to which you ought to ſacrifice even your juſt reſentments. Above all things, take care that a particular offence to you does not make you unjuſt to the general character of the offending perſon. Generous anger does not preclude eſteem for whatever is really eſtimable, nor does it deſtroy good-will to the perſon of its object: It even inſpires the deſire of overcoming him by benefits, and wiſhes to inflict no other puniſhment than the regret of having injured one, who deſerved his kindneſs: it is always placable, and ready to be reconciled, as ſoon as the offender is convinced of his

error; nor can any ſubſequent injury provoke it to recur to paſt diſobligations, which had been once forgiven. But it is perhaps unneceſſary to give rules for this caſe: The conſciouſneſs of injured innocence naturally produces dignity, and uſually prevents exceſs of anger. Our paſſion is moſt unruly, when we are conſcious of blame, and when we apprehend that we have laid ourſelves open to contempt. Where we know we have been wrong, the leaſt injuſtice in the degree of blame imputed to us, excites our bittereſt reſentment; but, where we know ourſelves faultleſs, the ſharpeſt accuſation

excites pity or contempt, rather than rage. Whenever therefore you feel yourſelf very angry, ſuſpect yourſelf to be in the wrong, and reſolve to ſtand the deciſion of your own conſcience before you caſt upon another the puniſhment, which is perhaps due to yourſelf. This ſelf-examination will at leaſt give you time to cool, and, if you are juſt, will diſpoſe you to balance your own wrong with that of your antagoniſt, and to ſettle the account with him on equal terms.

Peeviſhneſs, though not ſo violent and fatal in its immediate ef-

fects, is ſtill more unamiable than paſſion, and, if poſſible, more deſtructive of happineſs, in as much as it operates more continually. Though the fretful man injures us leſs, he diſguſts us more than the paſſionate one—becauſe he betrays a low and little mind, intent on trifles, and engroſſed by a paltry ſelf-love, which knows not how to bear the very apprehenſion of any inconvenience. It is ſelf-love then, which we muſt combat, when we find ourſelves aſſaulted by this infirmity; and, by voluntarily enduring inconveniencies, we ſhall habituate ourſelves to bear them with eaſe, and good-humour, when

occaſioned by others. Perhaps this is the beſt kind of religious mortification, as the chief end of denying ourſelves any innocent indulgences muſt be to acquire a habit of command over our paſſions and inclinations, particularly ſuch as are likely to lead us into evil. Another method of conquering this enemy is to abſtract our minds from that attention to trifling circumſtances, which uſually creates this uneaſineſs. Thoſe who are engaged in high and important purſuits are very little affected by ſmall inconveniencies. The man whoſe head is full of ſtudious thought, or whoſe heart is full of

care, will eat his dinner without knowing whether it was well or ill dreſſed, or whether it was ſerved punctually at the hour or not: and though abſence from the common things of life is far from deſirable —eſpecially in a woman—yet too minute and anxious an attention to them ſeldom fails to produce a teazing, mean, and fretful diſpoſition. I would therefore wiſh your mind to have always ſome objects in purſuit worthy of it, that it may not be engroſſed by ſuch as are in themſelves ſcarce worth a moment's anxiety. It is chiefly in the decline of life, when amuſements fail, and when the more importunate paſſions

ons ſubſide, that this infirmity is obſerved to grow upon us — and perhaps it will ſeldom fail to do ſo, unleſs carefully watched and counteracted by reaſon. We muſt then endeavour to ſubſtitute ſome purſuits in the place of thoſe, which can only engage us in the beginning of our courſe. The purſuit of glory and happineſs in another life, by every means of improving and exalting our own minds, becomes more and more intereſting to us, the nearer we draw to the end of all ſublunary enjoyments. Reading, reflection, rational converſation, and, above all, converſing with God, by prayer and medita-

tion, may preſerve us from taking that anxious intereſt in the little comforts and conveniencies of our remaining days, which uſually gives birth to ſo much fretfulneſs in old people. But though the aged and infirm are moſt liable to this evil — and they alone are to be pitied for it—yet we ſometimes ſee the young, the healthy, and thoſe who enjoy moſt outward bleſſings, inexcuſably guilty of it. The ſmalleſt diſappointment in pleaſure, or difficulty in the moſt trifling employment, will put wilful young people out of temper, and their very amuſements frequently become ſources of vexation and peeviſhneſs. How often

often have I ſeen a girl, preparing for a ball, or for ſome other public appearance — unable to ſatisfy her own vanity—fret over every ornament ſhe put on, quarrel with her maid, with her clothes, her hair; and growing ſtill more unlovely as ſhe grew more croſs, be ready to fight with her looking-glaſs for not making her as handſome as ſhe wiſhed to be. She did not conſider that the traces of this ill humour on her countenance would be a greater diſadvantage to her appearance than any defect in her dreſs—or even than the plaineſt features enlivened by joy and good-humour. There is a degree of reſignation

ſignation neceſſary even to the enjoyment of pleaſure; we muſt be ready and willing to give up ſome part of what we could wiſh for, before we can enjoy that which is indulged to us. I have no doubt that ſhe, who frets all the while ſhe is dreſſing for an aſſembly, will ſuffer ſtill greater uneaſineſs when ſhe is there. The ſame craving reſtleſs vanity will there endure a thouſand mortifications, which, in the midſt of ſeeming pleaſure, will ſecretly corrode her heart; whilſt the meek and humble generally find more gratification than they expected, and return home pleaſed and enlivened from every

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ſcene of amuſement, though they could have ſtaid away from it with perfect eaſe and contentment.

Sullenneſs, or obſtinacy, is perhaps a worſe fault of temper than either of the former — and, if indulged, may end in the moſt fatal extremes of ſtubborn melancholy, malice, and revenge. The reſentment which, inſtead of being expreſſed, is nurſed in ſecret, and continually aggravated by the imagination, will, in time, become the ruling paſſion; and then, how horrible muſt be his caſe, whoſe kind and pleaſurable affections are all ſwallowed up by the tormenting

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as well as deteſtable ſentiments
hatred and revenge! — " * Adm
" niſh thy friend, peradventure
" hath not done it: or, if he hat
" that he do it no more. — Adm
" niſh thy friend, peradventure
" hath not ſaid it: or, if he hat
" that he ſpeak it not again."
Brood not over a reſentment, whi
perhaps was at firſt ill grounde
and which is undoubtedly heig
tened by an heated imaginatic
But, when you have firſt ſubdu
your own temper, ſo as to be at
to ſpeak calmly, reaſonably, a
kindly, then expoſtulate with t
perſon you ſuppoſe to be in fault

* Eccluſ. xix. 13.

he

hear what ſhe has to ſay; and either reconcile yourſelf to her, or quiet your mind under the injury, by the principle of Chriſtian charity. But if it ſhould appear that you yourſelf have been moſt to blame, or if you have been in an error, acknowledge it fairly and handſomely; if you feel any reluctance to do ſo, be certain that it ariſes from pride, to conquer which is an abſolute duty. — "A "ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath," and a generous confeſſion oftentimes more than atones for the fault which requires it. Truth and juſtice demand that we ſhould acknowledge conviction, as ſoon as we

we feel it, and not maintain a erroneous opinion, or juſtify wrong conduct, merely from th falſe ſhame of confeſſing our pa ignorance. A falſe ſhame it ur doubtedly is, and as impolitic a unjuſt, ſince your error is alread ſeen by thoſe who endeavour to ſe you right; but your conviction and the candour and generoſi ty of owning it freely, may ſtil be an honour to you, and woul greatly recommend you to the per ſon with whom you diſputed. Witl a diſpoſition ſtrongly inclined t ſullenneſs or obſtinacy, this muſ be a very painful exertion; and t make a perfect conqueſt over your ſel

ſelf at once may perhaps appear impracticable, whilſt the zeal of ſelf juſtification, and the abhorrence of blame, are ſtrong upon you. But, if you are ſo unhappy as to yield to your infirmity, at one time, do not let this diſcourage you from renewing your efforts. Your mind will gain ſtrength from the conteſt, and your internal enemy will by degrees be forced to give ground. Be not afraid to revive the ſubject, as ſoon as you find yourſelf able to ſubdue your temper; and then frankly lay open the conflict you ſuſtained at the time: by this you will make all the amends in your power

for

for your fault, and will certainly change the diſguſt you had given into pity at leaſt if not admiration. Nothing is more endearing than ſuch a confeſſion — and you will find ſuch a ſatisfaction in your own conſciouſneſs, and in the renewed tenderneſs and eſteem you will gain from the perſon concerned, that your taſk for the future will be made more eaſy, and your reluctance to be convinced, will on every occaſion grow leſs and leſs.

The love of truth, and a real deſire of improvement, ought to be the only motives of argumentation

tion; and, where theſe are ſincere, no difficulty can be made of embracing the truth, as ſoon as it is perceived. But, in fact, people oftener diſpute from vanity and pride, which make it a grievous mortification to allow that we are the wiſer for what we have heard from another. To receive advice, reproof, and inſtruction, properly, is the ſureſt ſign of a ſincere and humble heart—and ſhews a greatneſs of mind, which commands our reſpect and reverence, while it appears ſo willingly to yield to us the ſuperiority.

Obſerve, notwithſtanding, that I do not wiſh you to hear of your faults without pain: Such an indifference would afford ſmall hopes of amendment. Shame and remorſe are the firſt ſteps to true repentance; yet we ſhould be willing to bear this pain, and thankful to the kind hand that inflicts it for our good. Nor muſt we, by ſullen ſilence under it, leave our kind phyſician in doubt, whether the operation has taken effect or not, or whether it has not added another malady, inſtead of curing the firſt. You muſt conſider, that thoſe who tell you of your faults, if they

do it from motives of kindneſs and not of malice, exert their friendſhip in a painful office, which muſt have coſt them as great an effort as it can be to you to acknowledge the ſervice; and, if you refuſe this encouragement, you cannot expect that any one, who is not abſolutely obliged to it by duty, will a ſecond time undertake ſuch an ill-requited trouble. What a loſs would this be to yourſelf!— how difficult would be our progreſs to that degree of perfection, which is neceſſary to our happineſs, was it not for the aſſiſtance we receive from each other! — this certainly is one of the means of

grace held out to us by our merciful judge, and, if we reject it, we are answerable for all the miscarriages we may fall into for want of it.

I know not, whether that strange caprice, that inequality of taste and behaviour, so commonly attributed to our sex, may be properly called a fault of temper — as it seems not to be connected with, or arising from our animal frame, but to be rather the fruit of our own self-indulgence, degenerating by degrees into such a wantonness of will as knows not how to please itself. When, instead of regulating our actions

actions by reaſon and principle, we ſuffer ourſelves to be guided by every ſlight and momentary impulſe of inclination, we ſhall, doubtleſs, appear ſo variable and inconſtant, that nobody can gueſs, by our behaviour to-day, what may be expected from us to-morrow; nor can we ourſelves tell whether what we delighted in, a week ago, will now afford us the leaſt degree of pleaſure. It is in vain for others to attempt to pleaſe us — we cannot pleaſe ourſelves, though all we could wiſh for waits our choice: and thus does a capricious woman become "ſick of herſelf, through "very ſelfiſhneſs:" And, when

this is the caſe, it is eaſy to judge how ſick others muſt be of her, and how contemptible and diſguſting ſhe muſt appear. This wretched ſtate is the uſual conſequence of power and flattery. May my dear child never meet with the temptation of that exceſſive and ill-judged indulgence from a huſband, which ſhe has happily eſcaped from her parents, and which ſeldom fails to reduce a woman to the miſerable condition of a humoured child, always unhappy from having nobody's will to ſtudy but its own. The inſolence of ſuch demands for yourſelf, and ſuch diſregard to the choice and inclinations of others,

can

can ſeldom fail to make you as many enemies as there are perſons obliged to bear with your humours; whilſt a compliant, reaſonable, and contented diſpoſition, would render you happy in yourſelf, and beloved by all your companions — particularly by thoſe, who live conſtantly with you; and, of what conſequence this is to your happineſs, a moment's reflection will convince you. Family friendſhips are the friendſhips made for us, if I may ſo ſpeak, by God himſelf. With the kindeſt intentions, he has knit the bands of family love, by indiſpenſable duties: and wretched are they who have burſt them

aſunder by violence and ill-will, o worn them out by conſtant littl diſobligations, and by the want o that attention to pleaſe, which th preſence of a ſtranger always in ſpires, but which is ſo often ſhame fully neglected towards thoſe, whom it is moſt our duty and intereſt t pleaſe. May you, my dear, b wiſe enough to ſee that every fa culty of entertainment, every en gaging qualification, which yo poſſeſs, is exerted to the beſt ad vantage for thoſe, whoſe love is o moſt importance to you — for thoſ who live under the ſame roof, an with whom you are connected fo life, either by the ties of blood, o

by the ſtill more ſacred obligations of a voluntary engagement.

To make you the delight and darling of your family, ſomething more is required than barely to be exempt from ill temper and troubleſome humours. The ſincere and genuine ſmiles of complacency and love muſt adorn your countenance. That ready compliance, that alertneſs to aſſiſt and oblige, which demonſtrates true affection, muſt animate your behaviour, and endear your moſt common actions. Politeneſs muſt accompany your greateſt familiarities, and reſtrain you from every thing that

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is really offenſive, or which can give a moment's unneceſſary pain. Converſation, which is ſo apt to grow dull and inſipid in families, nay, in ſome to be almoſt wholly laid aſide, muſt be cultivated with the frankneſs and openneſs of friendſhip, and by the mutual communication of whatever may conduce to the improvement or innocent entertainment of each other.

Reading, whether apart or in common, will furniſh uſeful and pleaſing ſubjects; and the ſprightlineſs of youth will naturally inſpire harmleſs mirth and native humour, if encouraged by a mutual deſire

deſire of diverting each other, and making the hours paſs agreeably in your own houſe: every amuſement that offers will be heightened by the participation of theſe dear companions, and by talking over every incident together and every object of pleaſure. If you have any acquired talent of entertainment, ſuch as muſic, painting, or the like, your own family are thoſe, before whom you ſhould moſt wiſh to excel, and for whom you ſhould always be ready to exert yourſelf; not ſuffering the accompliſhments which you have gained, perhaps by their means, and at their expence, to lie dormant, till the arrival of a ſtranger

ſtranger gives you ſpirit in the performance. Where this laſt is the caſe, you may be ſure vanity is the only motive of the exertion: A ſtranger will praiſe you more: But how little ſenſibility has that heart, which is not more gratified by the ſilent pleaſure painted on the countenance of a partial parent, or of an affectionate brother, than by the empty compliments of a viſiter, who is perhaps inwardly more diſpoſed to criticiſe and ridicule than to admire you.

I have been longer in this letter than I intended, yet it is with difficulty I can quit the ſubject, becauſe I think

I think it is ſeldom ſufficiently inſiſted on, either in books or in ſermons—and becauſe there are many perſons weak enough to believe themſelves in a ſafe and innocent courſe of life, whilſt they are daily harraſſing every body about them by their vexatious humours. But, you will, I hope, conſtantly bear in mind, that you can never treat a fellow creature unkindly, without offending the kind Creator and Father of all—and that you can no way render yourſelf ſo acceptable to him as by ſtudying to promote the happineſs of others, in every inſtance, ſmall as well as great.—The favour of God, and the love

of your companions, will ſurely be deemed rewards ſufficient to animate your moſt fervent endeavours; yet this is not all: the diſpoſition of mind, which I would recommend, is its own reward, and is in itſelf eſſential to happineſs. Cultivate it therefore, my dear child, with your utmoſt diligence — and, watch the ſymptoms of ill-temper, as they riſe, with a firm reſolution to conquer them, before they are even perceived by any other perſon. In every ſuch inward conflict, call upon your Maker, to aſſiſt the feeble nature he hath given you — and ſacrifice to *Him* every feeling that would tempt

you to diſobedience: So will you at length attain that true Chriſtian meekneſs, which is bleſſed in the ſight of God and man; "which "has the promiſe of this life as "well as of that which is to "come." Then will you pity, in others, thoſe infirmities, which you have conquered in yourſelf; and will think yourſelf as much bound to aſſiſt, by your patience and gentleneſs, thoſe who are ſo unhappy as to be under the dominion of evil paſſions, as you are to impart a ſhare of your riches to the poor and miſerable.

Adieu, my deareſt,

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR NIECE,

ECONOMY is ſo important a part of a woman's character, ſo neceſſary to her own happineſs, and ſo eſſential to her performing properly the duties of a wife and of a mother, that it ought to have the precedence of all other accompliſhments, and take its rank next to the firſt duties of life. It is, moreover, an *art* as well as a *virtue* — and, many well-meaning perſons, from ignorance, or from inconſideration, are ſtrangely deficient

cient in it. Indeed it is too often wholly neglected in a young woman's education — and, ſhe is ſent from her father's houſe to govern a family, without the leaſt degree of that knowledge, which ſhould qualify her for it: this is the ſource of much inconvenience; for though experience and attention may ſupply, by degrees, the want of inſtruction, yet this requires time—the family, in the mean time, may get into habits, which are very difficult to alter; and, what is worſe, the huſband's opinion of his wife's incapacity may be fixed too ſtrongly to ſuffer him ever to think juſtly of her gradual im-

improvements. I would therefore earneſtly adviſe you to make uſe of every opportunity you can find, for the laying in ſome ſtore of knowledge on this ſubject, before you are called upon to the practice; by obſerving what paſſes before you — by conſulting prudent and experienced miſtreſſes of families — and by entering in a book a memorandum of every new piece of intelligence you acquire: you may afterwards compare theſe with more mature obſervations, and you can make additions and corrections as you ſee occaſion. I hope it will not be long before your mother entruſts you with ſome part, at leaſt,

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of the management of your father's houſe. Whilſt you are under her eye, your ignorance cannot do much harm, though the relief to her at firſt may not be near ſo conſiderable as the benefit to yourſelf.

Economy conſiſts of ſo many branches, ſome of which deſcend to ſuch minuteneſſes, that it is impoſſible for me in writing to give you particular directions. The rude outlines may perhaps be deſcribed, and I ſhall be happy if I can furniſh you with any hint that may hereafter be uſefully applied.

The firſt and greateſt point is to lay out your general plan of living in a juſt proportion to your fortune and rank: if theſe two will not coincide, the laſt muſt certainly give way; for, if you have right principles, you cannot fail of being wretched under the ſenſe of the injuſtice as well as danger of ſpending beyond your income, and your diſtreſs will be continually increaſing. No mortifications, which you can ſuffer from retrenching in your appearance, can be comparable to this unhappineſs. If you would enjoy the real comforts of affluence, you ſhould lay your plan conſiderably within your income;

come; not for the pleaſure of amaſſing wealth — though, where there is a growing family, it is an abſolute duty to lay by ſomething every year—but to provide for contingencies, and to have the power of indulging your choice in the diſpoſal of the overplus—either in innocent pleaſures, or to increaſe your funds for charity and generoſity, which are in fact the true funds of pleaſure. In ſome circumſtances indeed, this would not be prudent: there are profeſſions, in which a man's ſucceſs greatly depends on his making ſome figure, where the bare ſuſpicion of poverty would bring on the reality. If,

by marriage, you ſhould be placed in ſuch a ſituation, it will be your duty to exert all your ſkill in the management of your income: Yet, even in this caſe, I would not ſtrain to the utmoſt for appearance, but would chuſe my models among the moſt prudent and moderate of my own claſs; and, be contented with ſlower advancement, for the ſake of ſecurity and peace of mind.

A contrary conduct is the ruin of many; and, in general, the wives of men in ſuch profeſſions might live in a more retired and frugal manner than they do, without

out any ill conſequence, if they did not make the ſcheme of advancing the ſucceſs of their huſbands an excuſe to themſelves for the indulgence of their own vanity and ambition.

Perhaps it may be ſaid, that the ſettling the general ſcheme of expences is ſeldom the wife's province, and that many men do not chooſe even to acquaint her with the real ſtate of their affairs. Where this is the caſe, a woman can be anſwerable for no more than is entruſted to her. But, I think it a very ill ſign, for one or both of the parties, where there is ſuch a

want of openneſs, in what equally concerns them. As I truſt you will deſerve the confidence of your huſband, ſo I hope you will be allowed free conſultation with him on your mutual intereſts; and, I believe, there are few men, who would not hearken to reaſon on their own affairs, when they ſaw a wife ready and deſirous to give up her ſhare of vanities and indulgences, and only earneſt to promote the common good of the family.

In order to ſettle your plan, it will be neceſſary to make a pretty exact calculation: and if, from this

this time, you accuſtom yourſelf to calculations in all the little expences entruſted to you, you will grow expert and ready at them, and be able to gueſs very nearly, where certainty cannot be attained. Many articles of expence are regular and fixed; theſe may be valued exactly; and, by conſulting with experienced perſons, you may calculate nearly the amount of others: any material article of conſumption, in a family of any given number and circumſtances, may be eſtimated pretty nearly. Your own expences of clothes and pocket-money ſhould be ſettled and circumſcribed, that you

you may be ſure not to exceed the juſt proportion. I think it an admirable method to appropriate ſuch a portion of your income, as you judge proper to beſtow in charity, to be ſacredly kept for that purpoſe and no longer conſidered as your own. By which means, you will avoid the temptation of giving leſs than you ought, through ſelfiſhneſs, or more than you ought, through good-nature or weakneſs. If your circumſtances allow of it, you might ſet apart another fund for acts of liberality or friendſhip, which do not come under the head of charity. The having ſuch funds ready at hand makes it eaſy and

pleaſant

pleaſant to give; and, when acts of bounty are performed without effort, they are generally done more kindly and effectually. If you are obliged in conſcience to lay up for a family, the ſame method of an appropriated fund for ſaving will be of excellent uſe, as it will prevent that continual and often ineffectual anxiety, which a general deſire of ſaving, without having fixed the limits, is ſure to create.

Regularity of payments and accounts is eſſential to Economy: — your houſe-keeping ſhould be ſettled at leaſt once a week, and all the

the bills paid: all other tradeſ men ſhould be paid, at fartheſt once a year. Indeed I think i more advantageous to pay oftener but, if you make them truſt yo longer, they muſt either charg proportionably higher, or be loſer by your cuſtom. Numbers of then fail, every year, from the crue cauſe of being obliged to giv their cuſtomers ſo much longe credit than the dealers, from whon they take their goods, will allov to them. If people of fortun conſidered this, they would no defer their payments, from mer negligence, as they often do, t the ruin of whole families.

Yo

You muſt endeavour to acquire ſkill in purchaſing: in order to this, you ſhould begin now to attend to the prices of things, and take every proper opportunity of learning the real value of every thing, as well as the marks whereby you are to diſtinguiſh the good from the bad.

In your table, as in your dreſs, and in all other things, I wiſh you to aim at *propriety* and *neatneſs*, or, if your ſtate demands it, *elegance*, rather than *ſuperfluous figure*. To go beyond your ſphere, either in dreſs, or in the appearance of your table, indicates a greater fault in

in your character than to be too much within it. It is impoſſible to enter into the *minutiæ* of the table: good ſenſe and obſervation on the beſt models muſt form your taſte, and a due regard to what you can afford muſt reſtrain it.

Ladies, who are fond of needle-work, generally chooſe to conſider that as a principal part of good houſewifery: and, though I cannot look upon it as of equal importance with the due regulation of a family, yet, in a middling rank, and with a moderate fortune, it is a neceſſary part of a woman's

duty, and a conſiderable article in expence is ſaved by it. Many young ladies make almoſt *every thing* they wear; by which means they can make a genteel figure at a ſmall expence. This, in your ſtation, is the moſt profitable and deſirable kind of work; and, as much of it as you can do, conſiſtently with a due attention to your health, to the improvement of your mind, and to the diſcharge of other duties, I ſhould think highly commendable. But, as I do not wiſh you to impoſe on the world by your appearance, I ſhould be contented to ſee you worſe dreſſed, rather than ſee your whole time employed

in

in preparations for it, or any of thoſe hours given to it, which are needful to make your body ſtrong and active, by exerciſe, or your mind rational by reading. Abſolute idleneſs is inexcuſable in a woman, becauſe the needle is always at hand for thoſe intervals, in which ſhe cannot be otherwiſe employed. If you are induſtrious, and if you keep good hours, you will find time for all your proper employments. Early riſing and a good diſpoſition of time, is eſſential to economy. The neceſſary orders, and examination into houſehold affairs, ſhould be diſpatched, as ſoon in the day, and

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as privately as poſſible, that they may not interrupt your huſband or gueſts, or break in upon converſation, or reading, in the remainder of the day. If you defer any thing that is neceſſary, you may be tempted by company, or by unforeſeen avocations, to forget, or to neglect it: hurry and irregularity will enſue, with expenſive expedients to ſupply the defect.

There is in many people, and particularly in youth, a ſtrange averſion to regularity — a deſire to delay what ought to be done immediately, in order to do ſomething elſe, which might as well be done

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There is in many people, and particularly in youth, a ſtrange averſion to regularity — a deſire to delay what ought to be done immediately, in order to do ſomething elſe, which might as well be done

afterwards. Be aſſured, it is of more conſequence to you than you can conceive, to get the better of this idle procraſtinating ſpirit, and to acquire habits of conſtancy and ſteadineſs, even in the moſt trifling matters: without them there can be no regularity, or conſiſtency of action or character — no dependance on your beſt intentions, which a ſudden humour may tempt you to lay aſide for a time, and which a thouſand unforeſeen accidents will afterwards render it more and more difficult to execute: no one can ſay what important conſequences may follow a trivial neglect of this kind. For exam-

ple — I have known one of theſe *procraſtinators* diſoblige, and gradually loſe very valuable friends, by delaying to write to them ſo long, that, having no good excuſe to offer, ſhe could no get courage enough to write at all and dropped their correſpondence entirely.

The neatneſs and order of your houſe and furniture is a part of Economy which will greatly affect your appearance and character, and to which you muſt yourſelf give attention, ſince it is not poſſible even for the *rich* and *great* to rely wholly on the care of ſervants, in ſuch points, without their being of-

ten neglected. The more magnificently a houſe is furniſhed, the more one is diſguſted with that air of confuſion, which often prevails where attention is wanting in the owner. But, on the other hand, there is a kind of neatneſs, which gives a lady the air of a houſe-maid, and makes her exceſſively troubleſome to every body, and particularly to her huſband: in this, as in all other branches of Economy, I wiſh you to avoid all parade and buſtle. Thoſe ladies who pique themſelves on the particular excellence of neatneſs, are very apt to forget that the decent order of the houſe ſhould be de-

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ſigned to promote the convenience and pleaſure of thoſe who are to be in it; and that, if it is converted into a cauſe of trouble and conſtraint, their huſbands and gueſts would be happier without it. The love of fame, that univerſal paſſion, will ſometimes ſhew itſelf on ſtrangely inſignificant ſubjects; and a perſon, who acts for praiſe only, will always go beyond the mark in every thing. The beſt ſign of a houſe being well governed is that nobody's attention is called to any of the little affairs of it, but all goes on ſo well of courſe that one is not led to make remarks upon any thing, nor to obſerve any ex-

traordinary effort that produces th general reſult of eaſe and elegance which prevails throughout.

Domeſtic Economy, and the cre dit and happineſs of a family, de pend ſo much on the choice anc proper regulation of ſervants, tha it muſt be conſidered as an eſſen tial part both of prudence and du ty. Thoſe, who keep a grea number of them, have a heavy charge on their conſciences, anc ought to think themſelves in ſome meaſure reſponſible for the morals and happineſs of ſo many of their fellow-creatures, deſigned like themſelves for immortality. Indeed

Indeed the cares of domeſtic management are by no means lighter to perſons of high rank and fortune, if they perform their duty, than to thoſe of a retired ſtation. It is with a family, as with a commonwealth, the more numerous and luxurious it becomes, the more difficult it is to govern it properly. — Though the great are placed above the little attentions and employments, to which a private gentlewoman muſt dedicate much of her time, they have a larger and more important ſphere of action, in which, if they are indolent and neglectful, the whole government of their houſe and fortune muſt fall into irregularity.

Whatever number of deputies they may employ to overlook their affairs, they muſt themſelves overlook thoſe deputies, and be ultimately anſwerable for the conduct of the whole. The characters of thoſe ſervants, who are entruſted with power over the reſt, cannot be too nicely enquired into; and the miſtreſs of the family muſt be ever watchful over their conduct—at the ſame time that ſhe muſt carefully avoid every appearance of ſuſpicion, which, whilſt it wounds and injures a worthy ſervant, only excites the artifice and cunning of an unjuſt one.

None,

None, who pretend to be friends of religion and virtue, ſhould ever keep a domeſtic, however expert in buſineſs, whom they know to be guilty of immorality. How unbecoming a ſerious character is it, to ſay of ſuch an one, "he is a bad "man, but a good ſervant!"— What a preference does it ſhew of private convenience to the intereſts of ſociety, which demand that vice ſhould be conſtantly diſcountenanced, eſpecially in every one's own houſehold; and that the ſober, honeſt, and induſtrious, ſhould be ſure of finding encouragement and reward, in the houſes of thoſe who maintain reſpectable characters.

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they appear before their ſervants, on whom their good-name ſo much depends, and from whom they can hope for no real reſpect, when their weakneſs is ſo apparent. When once a ſervant can ſay — "I cannot "do any thing to pleaſe my miſ- "treſs to-day" — all authority is loſt.

Thoſe, who continually change their ſervants, and complain of perpetual ill-uſage, have good reaſon to believe that the fault is in themſelves, and that they do not know how to govern. Few indeed poſſeſs the ſkill to unite authority with kindneſs, or are capable

ble of that ſteady and uniformly reaſonable conduct, which alone can maintain true dignity and command a willing and attentive obedience. Let us not forget that human nature is the ſame in all ſtations. If you can convince your ſervants, that you have a generous and conſiderate regard to their health, their intereſt, and their reaſonable gratifications — that you impoſe no commands but what are fit and right, nor ever reprove but with juſtice and temper — Why ſhould you imagine that they will be inſenſible to the good they receive, or whence ſuppoſe them incapable of eſteeming and prizing

ing ſuch a miſtreſs?—I could never, without indignation, hear it ſaid that "ſervants have no gratitude"—as if the condition of ſervitude excluded the virtues of humanity!—The truth is, maſters and miſtreſſes have ſeldom any real claim to gratitude. They think highly of what they beſtow and little of the ſervice they receive: they conſider only their own convenience, and ſeldom reflect on the kind of life their ſervants paſs with them: they do not aſk themſelves, whether it is ſuch an one as is conſiſtent with the preſervation of their health, their morals, their leiſure for religious duties, or with a proper

per ſhare of the enjoyments and comforts of life. The diſſipated manners, which now ſo generally prevail, perpetual abſence from home, and attendance on aſſemblies or at public places, is, in all theſe reſpects, pernicious to the whole houſehold—and to the *men ſervants* abſolutely ruinous. Their only reſource, in the tedious hours of waiting, whilſt their maſters and ladies are engaged in diverſions, is to find out ſomething of the ſame kind for themſelves. Thus are they led into gaming, drinking, extravagance, and bad company—and thus, by a natural progreſſion, they become diſtreſt and diſhoneſt.

That

That attachment and affiance, which ought to ſubſiſt between the dependant and his protector are deſtroyed. The maſter looks on his attendants as thieves and traitors, whilſt they conſider him as one, whoſe money only gives him power over them — and, who uſes that power, without the leaſt regard to their welfare.

* "The fool ſaith — I have no "friends — I have no thanks for all "my good deeds, and they that eat "my bread ſpeak evil of me." — Thus fooliſhly do thoſe complain, who chooſe their ſervants, as well

* Eccluſ. xx. 16.

as their friends, without diſcretion, or who treat them in a manner that no worthy perſon will bear.

I have been often ſhocked at the want of politeneſs, by which maſters and miſtreſſes ſometimes provoke impertinence from their ſervants: a gentleman, who would reſent to death, an imputation of falſehood from his equal, will not ſcruple, without proof, to accuſe his ſervant of it, in the groſſeſt terms. I have heard the moſt inſolent contempt of the whole claſs expreſſed at a table, whilſt five or ſix of them attended behind the chairs, who, the company ſeemed

to

to think, were without ſenſes, without underſtanding, or the natural feelings of reſentment: theſe are cruel injuries and will be retorted in ſome way or other.

If you, my dear, live to be at the head of a family, I hope, you will not only avoid all injurious treatment of your domeſtics, but behave to them with that courteſy and good-breeding, which will heighten their reſpect as well as their affection. If, on any occaſion, they do more than you have a right to require, give them, at leaſt, the reward of ſeeing that

they have obliged you. If, in your ſervice, they have any hardſhip to endure, let them ſee that you are concerned for the neceſſity of impoſing it. When they are ſick, give them all the attention and every comfort in your power, with a free heart and kind countenance; "* not blemiſhing thy good "deeds, nor uſing uncomfortable "words, when thou giveſt any "thing. Is not a word better "than a gift?—but both are with "a gracious man!—A fool will "upbraid churliſhly, and a gift of "the envious conſumeth the eyes."

* Eccluſ. xviii.

Whilſt

Whilſt you thus endear yourſelf to all your ſervants, you muſt ever carefully avoid making a favourite of any; unjuſt diſtinctions, and weak indulgencies to one, will of courſe excite envy and hatred in the reſt. Your favourite may eſtabliſh whatever abuſes ſhe pleaſes; none will dare to complain againſt her, and you will be kept ignorant of her ill practices, but, will feel the effects of them, by finding all your other ſervants uneaſy in their places, and, perhaps, by being obliged continually to change them.

When they have ſpent a reaſonable time in your ſervice, and have

behaved commendably, you ought to prefer them, if it is in your power, or to recommend them to a better proviſion. The hope of this keeps alive attention and gratitude and is the proper ſupport of induſtry. Like a parent, you ſhould keep in view their eſtabliſhment in ſome way, that may preſerve their old age from indigence; and, to this end, you ſhould endeavour to inſpire them with care to lay up part of their gains, and conſtantly diſcourage in them all vanity in dreſs and extravagance in idle expences. That you are bound to promote their eternal as well as temporal welfare, you cannot doubt, ſince, next to

your children, they are your neareſt dependants. You ought therefore to inſtruct them as far as you are able, furniſh them with good books ſuited to their capacity, and ſee that they attend the public worſhip of God: and you muſt take care ſo to paſs the ſabbath day as to allow them time, on that day at leaſt, for reading and reflection at home, as well as for attendance at church. Though this is a part of your religious duty, I mention it here, becauſe it is alſo a part of family management: for the ſame reaſon, I ſhall here take occaſion earneſtly to recommend family prayers, which are uſeful to all, but more particu-

larly to ſervants—who, being conſtantly employed, are led to the neglect of private prayer—and whoſe ignorance makes it very difficult for them to frame devotions for themſelves, or to chooſe proper helps, amidſt the numerous books of ſuperſtitious or enthuſiaſtic nonſenſe, which are printed for that purpoſe. Even, in a political light, this practice is eligible, ſince the idea, which it will give them of your regularity and decency, if not counter-acted by other parts of your conduct, will probably increaſe their reſpect for you, and will be ſome reſtraint, at leaſt on their outward behaviour, though it ſhould fail of

that

that inward influence, which in general may be hoped from it.

The prudent diſtribution of your charitable gifts may not improperly be conſidered as a branch of Economy, ſince the great duty of almſgiving cannot be truly fulfilled without a diligent attention ſo to manage the ſums you can ſpare as to produce the moſt real good to your fellow-creatures. Many are willing to give money, who will not beſtow their time and conſideration, and who therefore often hurt the community, when they mean to do good to individuals. The larger are your funds, the ſtronger is the call

upon you to exert your induſtry and care in diſpoſing of them properly. It ſeems impoſſible to give rules for this, as every caſe is attended with a variety of circumſtances which muſt all be conſidered. In general, charity is moſt uſeful, when it is appropriated to animate the induſtry of the young, to procure ſome eaſe and comforts to old age, and to ſupport in ſickneſs thoſe whoſe daily labour is their only maintenance in health. They, who are fallen into indigence, from circumſtances of eaſe and plenty, and in whom education and habit have added a thouſand wants to thoſe of nature, muſt be conſidered with the

the tendereſt ſympathy, by every feeling heart. It is needleſs to ſay that to ſuch the bare ſupport of exiſtence is ſcarcely a benefit — and that the delicacy and liberality of the manner, in which relief is here offered, can alone make it a real act of kindneſs. In great families, the waſte of proviſions, ſufficient for the ſupport of many poor ones, is a ſhocking abuſe of the gifts of providence: Nor ſhould any lady think it beneath her to ſtudy the beſt means of preventing it, and of employing the refuſe of luxury in the relief of the poor. Even the ſmalleſt families may give

give ſome aſſiſtance in this way, if care is taken that nothing be waſted.

I am ſenſible, my dear child, that very little more can be gathered from what I have ſaid on Economy, than the general importance of it, which cannot be too much impreſſed on your mind, ſince the natural turn of young people is to neglect and even deſpiſe it; not diſtinguiſhing it from parſimony and narrowneſs of ſpirit. But, be aſſured, my dear, there can be no true generoſity without it; and that the moſt enlarged and liberal mind will find itſelf not debaſed but ennobled

ennobled by it. Nothing is more common than to ſee the ſame perſon, whoſe want of Economy is ruining his family, conſumed with regret and vexation at the effect of his profuſion; and, by endeavouring to ſave, in ſuch trifles as will not amount to twenty pounds in a year, that which he waſtes by hundreds, incur the character and ſuffer the anxieties of a miſer, together with the misfortunes of a prodigal. A rational plan of expence will ſave you from all theſe corroding cares, and will give you the full and liberal enjoyment of what you ſpend. An air of eaſe, of hoſpitality and frankneſs will reign in your

your houſe, which will make it pleaſant to your friends and to yourſelf. "Better is a morſel of "bread," where this is found, than the moſt elaborate entertainment, with that air of conſtraint and anxiety, which often betrays the grudging heart through all the diſguiſes of civility.

That you, my dear, may unite in yourſelf the admirable virtues of Generoſity and Economy, which will be the grace and crown of all your attainments, is the earneſt wiſh of

Your ever affectionate

LETTER VIII.

WHILST you labour to enrich your mind with the eſſential virtues of Chriſtianity — with piety, benevolence, meekneſs, humility, integrity, and purity — and to make yourſelf uſeful in domeſtic management, I would not have my dear child neglect to purſue thoſe graces and acquirements, which may ſet her virtue in the moſt advantageous light, adorn her manners, and enlarge her underſtanding: and this, not in the ſpirit of vanity,

vanity, but in the innocent and laudable view of rendering herſelf more uſeful and pleaſing to her fellow-creatures, and conſequently more acceptable to God. Politeneſs of behaviour, and the attainment of ſuch branches of knowledge and ſuch arts and accompliſhments as are proper to your ſex, capacity, and ſtation, will prove ſo valuable to yourſelf through life, and will make you ſo deſirable a companion, that the neglect of them may reaſonably be deemed a neglect of duty; ſince it is undoubtedly our duty to cultivate the powers entruſted to us, and to render ourſelves as perfect as we can.

You muſt have often obſerved that nothing is ſo ſtrong a recommendation on a ſlight acquaintance as *politeneſs*; nor does it loſe its value by time or intimacy, when preſerved, as it ought to be, in the neareſt connections and ſtricteſt friendſhips. This delightful qualification — ſo univerſally admired and reſpected, but ſo rarely poſſeſſed in any eminent degree — cannot but be a conſiderable object of my wiſhes for you: nor ſhould either of us be diſcouraged by the apprehenſion that neither I am capable of teaching, nor you of learning it, in *perfection* — ſince whatever degree you

you attain will amply reward our pains.

To be perfectly polite, one muſt have great *preſence of mind*, with a delicate and quick *ſenſe of propriety*; or, in other words, one ſhould be able to form an inſtantaneous judgment of what is fitteſt to be ſaid or done, on every occaſion as it offers. I have known one or two perſons, who ſeemed to owe this advantage to nature only, and to have the peculiar happineſs of being born, as it were, with another ſenſe, by which they had an immediate perception of what was

proper

proper and improper, in caſes abſolutely new to them: but this is the lot of very few: In general, propriety of behaviour muſt be the fruit of inſtruction, of obſervation, and reaſoning; and is to be cultivated and improved like any other branch of knowledge or virtue. A good temper is a neceſſary ground work of it; and, if to this is added a good underſtanding, applied induſtriouſly to this purpoſe, I think it can hardly fail of attaining all that is eſſential in it. Particular modes and ceremonies of behaviour vary in different countries, and even in different parts of the ſame town. Theſe can only be

learned by obſervation on the manners of thoſe who are beſt ſkilled in them, and by keeping what is called good company. But the principles of politeneſs are the ſame in all places. Wherever there are human beings, it muſt be impolite to hurt the temper or to ſhock the paſſions of thoſe you converſe with. It muſt every where be good-breeding, to ſet your companions in the moſt advantageous point of light, by giving each the opportunity of diſplaying their moſt agreeable talents, and by carefully avoiding all occaſions of expoſing their defects;—to exert your own endeavours to pleaſe, and to amuſe, but

not to outſhine them; — to give each their due ſhare of attention and notice — not engroſſing the talk, when others are deſirous to ſpeak, nor, ſuffering the converſation to flag, for want of introducing ſomething to continue or renew a ſubject;—not to puſh your advantages in argument ſo far that your antagoniſt cannot retreat with honour: —In ſhort, it is an univerſal duty in ſociety to conſider others more than yourſelf — "in honour "preferring one another." Chriſtianity, in this rule, gives the beſt leſſon of politeneſs; yet judgement muſt be uſed in the application of it: Our humility muſt

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not be ſtrained ſo far as to diſtreſs thoſe we mean to honour; we muſt not quit our proper rank, nor force others to treat us improperly; or to accept, what we mean as an advantage, againſt their wills.—We ſhould be perfectly eaſy, and make others ſo if we can. But, this happy eaſe belongs perhaps to the laſt ſtage of perfection in politeneſs, and can hardly be attained till we are conſcious that we know the rules of behaviour, and are not likely to offend againſt propriety. In a very young perſon, who has ſeen little or nothing of the world this cannot be expected; but a real deſire of obliging, and a reſpectful atte

attention, will in a great meaſure ſupply the want of knowledge, and will make every one ready to overlook thoſe deficiencies, which are owing only to the want of opportunities to obſerve the manners of polite company. You ought not therefore to be too much depreſſed by the conſciouſneſs of ſuch deficiencies, but endeavour to get above the ſhame of wanting what you have not had the means of acquiring. Nothing heightens this falſe ſhame, and the aukwardneſs it occaſions, ſo much as vanity. The humble mind, contented to be known for what it is, and unembarraſſed by the dread of

betraying its ignorance, is preſen to itſelf, and can command the uſ of underſtanding, which will gene rally preſerve you from any grea indecorum, and will ſecure you from that ridicule, which is th puniſhment of affectation rathe than of ignorance. People of ſenſ will never deſpiſe you, whilſt you act naturally; but, the moment you attempt to ſtep out of your own character, you make yourſelf an object of juſt ridicule.

Many are of opinion that a very young woman can hardly be too ſilent and reſerved in company and certainly, nothing is ſo diſguſt-

ing

ing in youth as pertneſs and ſelf-conceit. But, modeſty ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from an aukward baſhfulneſs, and ſilence ſhould only be enjoined, when it would be forward and impertinent to talk. There are many proper opportunities for a girl, young even as you are, to ſpeak in company, with advantage to herſelf; and, if ſhe does it without conceit or affectation, ſhe will always be more pleaſing than thoſe, who ſit like ſtatues without ſenſe or motion. When you are ſilent, your looks ſhould ſhew your attention and preſence to the company: a reſpectful and earneſt attention is the moſt delicate

kind of praiſe, and never fails to gratify and pleaſe. You muſt appear to be intereſted in what is ſaid, and endeavour to improve yourſelf by it: if you underſtand the ſubject well enough to aſk now and then a pertinent queſtion, or if you can mention any circumſtances relating to it that have not before been taken notice of, this will be an agreeable way of ſhewing your willingneſs to make a part of the company, and will probably draw a particular application to you, from ſome one or other. Then, when called upon, you muſt not draw back as unwilling to anſwer, nor confine your-

ſelf

ſelf merely to *yes* or *no*, as is the cuſtom of many young perſons, who become intolerable burthens to the miſtreſs of the houſe, whilſt ſhe ſtrives in vain to draw them into notice and to give them ſome ſhare in the converſation.

In your father's houſe it is certainly proper for you to pay civility to the gueſts, and to talk to them in your turn—with modeſty and reſpect—if they encourage you to it. Young ladies of near your own age, who viſit there, fall of courſe to your ſhare to entertain. But, whilſt you exert yourſelf to make their viſit agreeable to them, you muſt

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fire of laughing will mak

conſiderate young perſons find a ſubject of ridicule, even in the moſt reſpectable characters. Old age, which—if not diſgraced by vice or affectation — has the juſteſt title to reverence, will be mimicked and inſulted; and even, perſonal defects and infirmities will too often excite contempt and abuſe, inſtead of compaſſion. If you have ever been led into ſuch an action, my dear girl, call it ſeriouſly to mind, when you are confeſſing your faults to Almighty God: and, be fully perſuaded, that it is not one of the leaſt which you have to repent of. You will be immediately convinced of this, by comparing it with the great rule

of

of juſtice, that of doing to all as you would they ſhould do unto you. No perſon living is inſenſible to the injury of contempt, nor is there any talent ſo invidious, or ſo certain to create ill-will, as that of ridicule. The natural effects of years, which all hope to attain, and the infirmities of the body, which none can prevent, are ſurely of all others the moſt improper objects of mirth. There are ſubjects enough that are innocent, and on which you may freely indulge the vivacity of your ſpirits; for I would not condemn you to perpetual ſerioufneſs — on the contrary, I delight in a joyous temper, at all ages,

ages, and particularly at yours. Delicate and good-natured raillery amongſt equal friends, if pointed only againſt ſuch trifling errors as the owner can heartily join to laugh at, or ſuch qualities as they do not pique themſelves upon, is both agreeable and uſeful; but then it muſt be offered in perfect kindneſs and ſincere good humour; if tinctured with the leaſt degree of malice, its ſting becomes venomous and deteſtable. The perſon rallied ſhould have liberty and ability to return the jeſt, which muſt be dropped upon the firſt appearance of its affecting the temper.

You

You will wonder perhaps, when I tell you that there are ſome characters in the world, which I would freely allow you to laugh at—tho' not in their preſence. Extravagant vanity, and affectation, are the natural ſubjects of ridicule, which is their proper puniſhment. When you ſee old people, inſtead of maintaining the dignity of their years, ſtruggling againſt nature to conceal them, affecting the graces, and imitating the follies of youth—Or a young perſon aſſuming the importance and ſolemnity of old age—I do not wiſh you to be inſenſible to the ridicule of ſuch abſurd deviations from truth and na-

ture. You are welcome to laugh, when you leave the company, provided you lay up a leſſon for yourſelf at the ſame time, and remember, that unleſs you improve your mind whilſt you are young, you alſo will be an inſignificant fool in old age — and that, if you are preſuming and arrogant in youth, you are as ridiculous as an old woman with a head-dreſs of flowers.

In a young lady's behaviour towards gentlemen, great delicacy is certainly required: yet, I believe, women oftener err from too great a conſciouſneſs of the ſuppoſed views of men than from inattention to thoſe

thoſe views, or want of caution againſt them. You are at preſent rather too young to want rules on this ſubject; but I could wiſh that you ſhould behave almoſt in the ſame manner three years hence as now; and retain the ſimplicity and innocence of childhood, with the ſenſe and dignity of riper years. Men of looſe morals or impertinent behaviour muſt always be avoided: or, if at any time you are obliged to be in their company, you muſt keep them at a diſtance by cold civility. But, with regard to thoſe gentlemen, whom your parents think it proper for you to converſe with,

and who give no offence by their own manners, to them I wiſh you to behave with the ſame frankneſs and ſimplicity as if they were of your own ſex. If you have natural modeſty, you will never tranſgreſs its bounds, whilſt you converſe with a man, as one rational creature with another, without any view to the poſſibility of a lover or admirer, where nothing of that kind is profeſt; where it is, I hope, you will ever be equally a ſtranger to coquetry and prudery; and that you will be able to diſtinguiſh the effects of real eſteem and love from idle gallantry and unmeaning fine ſpeeches; the ſlighter notice you

take of theſe laſt, the better; and that, rather with good-humour'd contempt than with affected gravity: but, the firſt muſt be treated with ſeriouſneſs and well-bred ſincerity: not giving the leaſt encouragement, which you do not mean, nor aſſuming airs of contempt, where it is not deſerved. But this belongs to a ſubject, which I have touched upon in a former letter. I have already told you that you will be unſafe in every ſtep which leads to a ſerious attachment, unleſs you conſult your parents, from the firſt moment you apprehend any thing of that ſort to be intended: let them be your firſt confidants,

dants, and let every part of your conduct, in ſuch a caſe, be particularly directed by them.

With regard to accompliſhments, the chief of theſe is a competent ſhare of reading, well choſen and properly regulated: and of this I ſhall ſpeak more largely hereafter. Dancing and the knowledge of the French tongue are now ſo univerſal that they cannot be diſpenſed with in the education of a gentlewoman; and indeed they both are uſeful as well as ornamental; the firſt, by forming and ſtrengthening the body, and improving the car-

riage; the ſecond, by opening a large field of entertainment and improvement for the mind. I believe there are more agreeable books of female literature in French than in any other language; and, as they are not leſs commonly talked of than Engliſh books, you muſt often feel mortified in company, if you are too ignorant to read them. Italian would be eaſily learnt after French, and, if you have leiſure and opportunity, may be worth your gaining, though in your ſtation of life it is by no means neceſſary.

To

To write a free and legible hand, and to underſtand common arithmetic, are indiſpenſable requiſites.

As to muſic and drawing, I would only wiſh you to follow as Genius leads: you have ſome turn for the firſt, and I ſhould be ſorry to ſee you neglect a talent, which will at leaſt afford you an innocent amuſement though it ſhould not enable you to give much pleaſure to your friends: I think the uſe of both theſe arts is more for yourſelf than for others: it is but ſeldom that a private perſon has leiſure or application enough to gain any high degree of excellence in

them; and your own partial family are perhaps the only perſons who would not much rather be entertained by the performance of a profeſſor than by yours: but, with regard to yourſelf, it is of great conſequence to have the power of filling up agreeably thoſe intervals of time, which too often hang heavily on the hands of a woman, if her lot be caſt in a retired ſituation. Beſides this, it is certain that even a ſmall ſhare of knowledge in theſe arts will heighten your pleaſure in the performances of others: the taſte muſt be improved before it can be ſuſceptible of an exquiſite reliſh for any of the imitative

imitative arts: An unſkilful ear is ſeldom capable of comprehending *Harmony*, or of diſtinguiſhing the moſt *delicate* charms of *Melody*. The pleaſure of ſeeing fine paintings, or even of contemplating the beauties of Nature, muſt be greatly heighten'd by our being converſant with the rules of drawing, and by the habit of conſidering the moſt picturesque objects. As I look upon taſte to be an ineſtimable fund of innocent delight, I wiſh you to loſe no opportunity of improving it, and of cultivating in yourſelf the reliſh of ſuch pleaſures as will not interfere with a rational ſcheme of life, nor

lead you into diſſipation, with all its attendant evils of vanity and luxury.

As to the learned languages, though I reſpect the abilities and application of thoſe ladies, who have attained them, and who make a modeſt and proper uſe of them, yet I would by no means adviſe you — or any woman who is not ſtrongly impell'd by a particular genius — to engage in ſuch ſtudies. The labour and time which they require are generally incompatible with our natures and proper employments: the real knowledge which they ſupply is not eſſential, ſince the Engliſh,

French, or Italian tongues afford tolerable tranſlations of all the moſt valuable productions of antiquity, beſides the multitude of original authors which they furniſh; and theſe are much more than ſufficient to ſtore your mind with as many ideas as you will know how to manage. The danger of pedantry and preſumption in a woman—of her exciting envy in one ſex and jealouſy in the other — of her exchanging the graces of imagination for the ſeverity and preciſeneſs of a ſcholar, would be, I own, ſufficient to frighten me from the ambition of ſeeing my girl remarkable for learning. Such objections

jections are perhaps ſtill ſtronger with regard to the abſtruſe ſciences.

Whatever tends to embelliſh your fancy, to enlighten your underſtanding, and furniſh you with ideas to reflect upon when alone, or to converſe upon in company, is certainly well worth your acquiſition. The wretched expedient, to which ignorance ſo often drives our ſex, of calling in ſlander to enliven the tedious inſipidity of converſation, would alone be a ſtrong reaſon for enriching your mind with innocent ſubjects of entertainment, which

which may render you a fit companion for perſons of ſenſe and knowledge, from whom you may reap the moſt deſireable improvements: for, though I think reading indiſpenſably neceſſary to the due cultivation of your mind, I prefer the converſation of ſuch perſons to every other method of inſtruction; but, this you cannot hope to enjoy, unleſs you qualify yourſelf to bear a part in ſuch ſociety, by, at leaſt, a moderate ſhare of reading.

Though *religion* is the moſt important of all your purſuits, there are not many *books* on that ſubject, which

which I ſhould recommend to you at preſent. Controverſy is wholly improper at your age, and it is alſo too ſoon for you to enquire into the evidence of the truth of revelation, or to ſtudy the difficult parts of ſcripture: when theſe ſhall come before you, there are many excellent books, from which you may receive great aſſiſtance. At preſent, practical divinity — clear of ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, but addreſſed to the heart, and written with a warmth and ſpirit capable of exciting in it pure and rational piety — is what I wiſh you to meet with.

The

The principal ſtudy, I would recommend, is *hiſtory*. I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the ſame time, or that is ſo likely to form and ſtrengthen your judgment, and, by giving you a liberal and comprehenſive view of human nature, in ſome meaſure to ſupply the defect of that experience, which is uſually attained too late to be of much ſervice to us. Let me add, that more materials for converſation are ſupplied by this kind of knowledge, than by almoſt any other; but I have more to ſay to you on this ſubject in a future letter.

The faculty, in which women uſually moſt excel, is that of imagination; and, when properly cultivated, it becomes the ſource of all that is moſt charming in ſociety. Nothing you can read will ſo much contribute to the improvement of this faculty as *poetry*; which, if applied to its true ends, adds a thouſand charms to thoſe ſentiments of religion, virtue, generoſity, and delicate tenderneſs, by which the human ſoul is exalted and refined. I hope, you are not deficient in natural taſte for this enchanting art, but that you will find it one of your greateſt

pleaſures to be converſant with the beſt poets, whom our language can bring you acquainted with, particularly, thoſe immortal ornaments of our nation, *Shakeſpear* and *Milton*. The firſt is not only incomparably the nobleſt genius in dramatic poetry, but the greateſt maſter of nature, and the moſt perfect characteriſer of men and manners: in this laſt point of view, I think him ineſtimable; and I am perſuaded that, in the courſe of your life, you will ſeldom find occaſion to correct thoſe obſervations on human nature, and thoſe principles of morality, which you may extract from

from his capital pieces. You will at firſt find his language difficult; but, if you take the aſſiſtance of a friend, who underſtands it well, you will by degrees enter into his manner of phraſeology and perceive a thouſand beauties, which at firſt lay buried in obſolete words and uncouth conſtructions. The admirable *Eſſay on Shakeſpear*, which has lately appeared, ſo much to the honour of our ſex, will open your mind to the peculiar excellencies of this author, and enlighten your judgment on dramatic poetry in general, with ſuch force of reaſon and brilliancy of wit

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cannot fail to delight as well as inſtruct you.

Our great Engliſh poet, Milton, is as far above my praiſe as his *Paradiſe Loſt* is above any thing which I am able to read, except the ſacred writers. The ſublimity of his ſubject ſometimes leads him into abſtruſeneſs; but many parts of his great poem are eaſy to all comprehenſions, and muſt find their way directly to every heart by the tenderneſs and delicacy of his ſentiments, in which he is not leſs ſtrikingly excellent than in the richneſs and ſublimity of his imagination. Addiſon's Criticiſm in the

Spectators, written with that beauty, elegance, and judgment, which diſtinguiſh all his writings, will aſſiſt you to underſtand and to reliſh this poem.

It is needleſs to recommend to you the tranſlations of Homer and Virgil, which every body reads that reads at all. You muſt have heard that Homer is eſteemed the father of poetry, the original from whence all the moderns—notexcepting Milton himſelf—borrow ſome of their greateſt beauties, and from whom they extract thoſe rules for compoſition, which are found moſt agreeable to nature and tru taſt

taſte. Virgil, you know, is the next in rank amongſt the claſſics: You will read his Eneid with extreme pleaſure, if ever you are able to read Italian, in Annibal Caro's tranſlation; the idiom of the Latin and Italian languages being more alike, it is, I believe, much cloſer, yet preſerves more of the ſpirit of the original than the Engliſh tranſlations.

For the reſt, fame will point out to you the moſt conſiderable of our poets; and I would not exclude any of name, among thoſe whoſe morality is unexceptionable: but of poets as of all other authors, I

wiſh you to read only ſuch as are properly recommended to you—ſince there are many who debaſe their divine art, by abuſing it to the purpoſes of vice and impiety. If you could read poetry with a judicious friend, who would lead your judgment to a true diſcernment of its beauties and defects, it would inexpreſſibly heighten both your pleaſure and improvement. But, before you enter upon this, ſome acquaintance with the *Heathen Mythology* is neceſſary. I think that you muſt before now have met with ſome book under the title of *The Pantheon:* And, if once you know as much of the gods and goddeſſes

as

as the moſt common books on the ſubject will tell you, the reſt may be learned by reading Homer: but then you muſt particularly attend to him in this view. I do not expect you to penetrate thoſe numerous myſteries — thoſe amazing depths of morality, religion, and metaphyſics — which ſome pretend to have diſcovered in his mythology; but, to know the names and principal offices of the Gods and goddeſſes, with ſome idea of their moral meaning, ſeems requiſite to the underſtanding almoſt any poetical compoſition. As an inſtance of the *moral meaning* I ſpeak of, I will mention an obſervation of Boſſuet,

That Homer's poetry was particularly recommended to the Greeks by the ſuperiority which he aſcribes to them over the Aſiatics; this ſuperiority is ſhewn in the Iliad, not only in the conqueſt of Aſia by the Greeks, and in the actual deſtruction of its capital, but in the diviſion and arrangement of the gods, who took part with the contending nations. On the ſide of Aſia was *Venus* — that is, ſenſual paſſion — pleaſure — and effeminacy. On the ſide of Greece was *Juno* — that is, matronly gravity and conjugal love; together with *Mercury* — invention and eloquence — and *Jupiter* — or political wiſdom. On the ſide of

Aſia

Aſia was *Mars*, who repreſents brutal valour and blind fury. On that of Greece was *Pallas*—that is military diſcipline, and bravery, guarded by judgment.

This, and many other inſtances that might be produced, will ſhew you how much of the beauty of the poet's art muſt be loſt to you, without ſome notion of theſe allegorical perſonages. Boys, in their ſchool-learning, have this kind of knowledge impreſſed on their minds by a variety of books; but women, who do not go through the ſame courſe of inſtruction, are very apt to forget what little they read or

hear on the ſubject: —I adviſe you therefore never to loſe an opportunity of enquiring into the meaning of any thing you meet with in poetry, or in painting, alluding to the hiſtory of any of the heathen deities, and of obtaining from ſome friend an explanation of its connection with true hiſtory, or of its allegorical reference, to morality or to phyſics.

Natural philoſophy, in the largeſt ſenſe of the expreſſion, is too wide a field for you to undertake; but, the ſtudy of nature, as far as may ſuit your powers and opportunities, you will find a moſt ſublime entertainment:

tainment: the objects of this ſtudy are all the ſtupendous works of the Almighty Hand that lie within the reach of our obſervation. In the works of man perfection is aimed at, but, it can only be found in thoſe of the Creator. The contemplation of perfection muſt produce delight, and every natural object around you would offer this delight, if it could attract your attention: if you ſurvey the earth, every leaf that trembles in the breeze, every blade of graſs beneath your feet is a wonder as abſolutely beyond the reach of human art to imitate as the conſtruction of the univerſe. Endleſs pleaſures, to

thoſe who have a taſte for them, might be derived from the endleſs variety to be found in the compoſition of this globe and its inhabitants. The foſſil—the vegetable—and the animal world—gradually riſing in the ſcale of excellence—the innumerable ſpecies of each, ſtill preſerving their ſpecific differences from age to age, yet of which no two individuals are ever perfectly alike—afford ſuch a range for obſervation and enquiry as might engroſs the whole term of our ſhort life if followed minutely. Beſides all the animal creation obvious to our unaſſiſted ſenſes, the eye, aided by philoſophical inven-

tions,

tions, ſees myriads of creatures, which by the ignorant are not known to have exiſtence: it ſees all nature teem with life; every fluid —each part of every vegetable and animal—ſwarm with its peculiar inhabitants — inviſible to the naked eye, but as perfect in all their parts, and enjoying life as indiſputably, as the elephant or the whale.

But, if from the earth, and from theſe minute wonders, the philoſophic eye is raiſed towards the Heavens, what a ſtupendous ſcene there opens to it's view! — thoſe brilliant lights that ſparkle to the eye of ignorance as gems adorning the ſky,

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or as lamps to guide the traveller by night, aſſume an importance that amazes the underſtanding! — they appear to be *worlds*, formed like ours for a variety of inhabitants — or *ſuns*, enlightening numberleſs other worlds too diſtant for our diſcovery! — I ſhall ever remember the aſtoniſhment and rapture with which my mind received this idea, when I was about your age; it was then perfectly new to me, and it is impoſſible to deſcribe the ſenſations I felt from the glorious, boundleſs proſpect of infinite beneficence burſting at once upon my imagination! — Who can contemplate ſuch a ſcene unmoved? — if your curioſity

curioſity is excited to enter upon this noble enquiry, a few books on the ſubject, and thoſe of the eaſieſt ſort, with ſome of the common experiments, may be ſufficient for your purpoſe — which is to enlarge your mind, and to excite in it the moſt ardent gratitude and profound adoration towards that great and good Being, who exerts his boundleſs power in communicating various portions of happineſs through all the immenſe regions of creation.

Moral philoſophy, as it relates to human actions, is of ſtill higher importance than the ſtudy of nature. The works of the ancients on this ſubject are univerſally ſaid

to be entertaining as well as inſtructive, by thoſe who can read them in their original languages; and ſuch of them as are well tranſlated will undoubtedly, ſome years hence, afford you great pleaſure and improvement. You will alſo find many agreeable and uſeful books, written originally in French, and in Engliſh, on morals and manners: for the preſent, there are works, which, without aſſuming the ſolemn air of philoſophy, will enlighten your mind on theſe ſubjects, and introduce inſtruction in an eaſier dreſs: of this ſort are many of the moral eſſays, that have appeared in periodical papers — which,

which, when excellent in their kind—as are the *Spectators*, *Guardians*, *Ramblers*, and *Adventurers*—are particularly uſeful to young people, as they comprehend a great variety of ſubjects—introduce many ideas and obſervations that are new to them—and lead to a habit of reflecting on the characters and events that come before them in real life, which I conſider as the beſt exerciſe of the underſtanding.

Books on taſte and criticiſm will hereafter be more proper for you than at preſent: whatever can improve your diſcernment, and render your taſte elegant and juſt, muſt be

be of great conſequence to your enjoyments as well as to the embelliſhment of your underſtanding.

I would by no means exclude the kind of reading, which young people are naturally moſt fond of; though I think the greateſt care ſhould be taken in the choice of thoſe *fictitious ſtories*, that ſo enchant the mind — moſt of which tend to inflame the paſſions of youth, whilſt the chief purpoſe of education ſhould be to moderate and reſtrain them. Add to this, that both the writing and ſentiments of moſt novels and romances are ſuch as are only proper to vitiate your

your ſtile, and to miſlead your heart and underſtanding. The expectation of extraordinary adventures — which ſeldom ever happen to the ſober and prudent part of mankind—and the admiration of extravagant paſſions and abſurd conduct, are ſome of the uſual fruits of this kind of reading; which, when a young woman makes it her chief amuſement, generally renders her ridiculous in converſation, and miſerably wrong-headed in her purſuits and behaviour. There are however works of this claſs, in which excellent morality is joined with the moſt lively pictures of the

human mind, and with all that can entertain the imagination and intereſt the heart. But, I muſt repeatedly exhort you, never to read any thing of the ſentimental kind, without taking the judgment of your beſt friends in the choice; for, I am perſuaded, that the indiſcriminate reading of ſuch kind of books corrupts more female hearts than any other cauſe whatſoever.

Before I cloſe this correſpondence, I ſhall point out the courſe of hiſtory I wiſh you to purſue, and give you my thoughts of geography and chronology, ſome know-

knowledge of both being, in my opinion, neceſſary to the reading of hiſtory with any advantage.

I am, my deareſt niece,
your ever affectionate.

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I HAVE told you that you will not be able to read hiſtory, with much pleaſure or advantage, without ſome little knowledge of *Geography* and *Chronology*. They are both very eaſily attained—I mean

in the degree that will be neceſſary for you. You muſt be ſenſible that you can know but little of a country, whoſe ſituation with reſpect to the reſt of the world you are entirely ignorant of—and that, it is to little purpoſe that you are able to mention a fact, if you cannot nearly aſcertain the *time* in which it happened, which alone, in many caſes, gives importance to the fact itſelf.

In Geography — the eaſieſt of all ſciences, and the beſt adapted to the capacity of children—I ſuppoſe you to have made ſome beginning; to know at leaſt the figure of the earth

earth—the ſuppoſed lines—the degrees—how to meaſure diſtances—and a few of the common terms: If you do not already know theſe, two or three leſſons will be ſufficient to attain them: the reſt is the work of memory, and is eaſily gained by reading with maps; for I do not wiſh your knowledge to be exact and maſterly—but ſuch only as is neceſſary for the purpoſe of underſtanding hiſtory, and, without which, even a news-paper would be unintelligible. It may be ſufficient for this end, if, with reſpect to *ancient* Geography, you have a general idea of the ſituation of all the great ſtates, without being able

preciſely to aſcertain their limits. But, in the *modern*, you ought to know the bounds and extent of every ſtate in Europe, and its ſituation with reſpect to the reſt. The other parts of the world will require leſs accurate knowledge, except with regard to the European ſettlements.

It may be an uſeful and agreeable method, when you learn the ſituation of any important country, to join with that knowledge ſome one or two leading facts or circumſtances concerning it, ſo that its particular property may always put you in mind of the ſituation, and the

the ſituation, in like manner, recall the particular property. When, for inſtance, you learn in what part of the globe to find Ethiopia, to be told at the ſame time that, in that vaſt unknown tract of country, the Chriſtian religion was once the religion of the ſtate, would be of ſervice — becauſe the geographical and hiſtorical knowledge would aſſiſt each other. Thus, to join with Egypt, *the nurſe and parent of arts and of ſuperſtition* — with Perſia, *ſhocking deſpotiſm and perpetual revolutions* — with ancient Greece, *freedom and genius* — with Scythia, *hardineſs and conqueſt*, are hints which you may make uſe of as you

pleaſe. Perhaps annexing to any country the idea of ſome familiar form which it moſt reſembles may at firſt aſſiſt you to retain a general notion of it; thus Italy has been called a *boot*—and Europe compared to a *woman ſitting*.

The difference of the ancient and modern names of places is ſomewhat perplexing; the moſt important ſhould be known by both names at the ſame time, and you muſt endeavour to fix a few of thoſe which are of moſt conſequence ſo ſtrongly in your mind, by thinking of them, and being often told of them, that the ancient name

name ſhall always call up the modern one to your memory, and the modern the ancient: Such as the Egean See, now *The Archipelago*— The Peloponneſus, now *The Morea* — Crete, *Candia*,—Gaul, *France*— Babylon, *Bagdat*—Byſantium—to which the Romans tranſplanted their ſeat of empire—*Conſtantinople*, &c.

There have been ſo many ingenious contrivances to make Geography eaſy and amuſing, that I cannot hope to add any thing of much ſervice; I would only prevail with you not to neglect acquiring, by whatever method pleaſes you beſt, that

that ſhare of knowledge in it, which you will find neceſſary, and which is ſo eaſily attained; and I intreat that you would learn it in ſuch a manner as to fix it in your mind, ſo that it may not be loſt and forgotten among other childiſh acquiſitions, but that it may remain ready for uſe through the reſt of your life.

Chronology indeed has more of difficulty; but, if you do not bewilder yourſelf by attempting to learn too much and too minutely at firſt, you need not deſpair of gaining enough for the purpoſe of reading hiſtory with pleaſure and utility.

Chrono-

Chronology may be naturally divided into three parts, *the Ancient* — *the Middle* — and *the Modern.* — With reſpect to all theſe, the beſt direction that can be given is to fix on ſome periods or epochas, which, by being often mentioned and thought of, explained and referred to, will at laſt be ſo deeply engraven on the memory, that they will be ready to preſent themſelves whenever you call for them: theſe indeed ſhould be few, and ought to be well choſen for their importance, ſince they are to ſerve as elevated ſtations to the mind, from which it may look backwards and forwards upon a great variety of facts.

Till

Till your more learned friends ſhall ſupply you with better, I will take the liberty to recommend the following, which I have found of ſervice to myſelf.

In the ancient chronology, you will find there were four thouſand years from the creation to the redemption of man — and that Noah and his family were miraculouſly preſerved in the ark 1650 years after Adam's creation.

As there is no hiſtory, except that in the Bible, of any thing before the flood, we may ſet out from that great event, which happened, as I have

have ſaid above, in the year of the world 1650.

The 2350 years, which paſſed from the deluge to our Saviour's birth, may be thus divided.—There have been four ſucceſſive *Empires* called *Univerſal*, becauſe they extended over a great part of the then known world — theſe are uſually diſtinguiſhed by the name of *The Four great Monarchies:* the three firſt of them are included in ancient Chronology, and begun and ended in the following manner:

1ſt, THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, founded by Nimrod in the year of the

the world 1800, ended under Sardanapalus in 3250, endured 1450 years.

The Median—though not accounted one of the four great monarchies, being conqueſts of rebels on the Aſſyrian empire—comes in here for about 200 years.

2d, THE PERSIAN EMPIRE, which began under Cyrus, in the year of the world 3450, ended in Darius in 3670, before Chriſt 330, laſted a little more than 200 years.

3d, THE GRECIAN EMPIRE, begun under Alexander the Great in

3670, was ſoon after his death diſmembered by his ſucceſſors, but the different parcels into which they divided it were poſſeſſed by their reſpective families, till the famous Cleopatra, the laſt of the race of Ptolemy, one of Alexander's captains who reigned in Egypt, was conquered by Julius Cæſar, about half a century before our Lord's birth, which is a term of about 300 years.

Thus you ſee that from the deluge to the eſtabliſhment of the firſt great monarchy—the Aſſyrian

— is - - - - - -	150 years
The Aſſyrian empire continued - - -	1450
The Median - - -	200
The Perſian - - -	200
The Grecian - - -	300
From Julius Ceſar, with whom began the fourth great monarchy — viz. the Roman—to Chriſt - -	50
In all - -	2350 years

The term from the deluge to Chriſt.

I do not give you theſe dates and periods as correctly true, for I have taken only round numbers as more eaſily retained by the memory; ſo

that when you come to conſult chronological books or tables, you will find variances of ſome years between them and the above accounts; but preciſe exactneſs is not material to a beginner.

I offer this ſhort table as a little ſpecimen of what you may eaſily do for yourſelf; but even this ſketch, ſlight as it is, will give you a general notion of the ancient hiſtory of the world, from the deluge to the birth of Chriſt.

Within this period flouriſhed the Grecian and Roman republics, with the hiſtory and chronology of which it will be expected you ſhould be

tolerably well acquainted; and indeed you will find nothing in the records of mankind ſo entertaining. Greece was divided into many petty ſtates, whoſe various revolutions and annals you can never hope diſtinctly to remember; you are therefore to conſider them as forming together one great kingdom — like the Germanic body, or the united provinces—compoſed ſeparately of different governments but ſometimes acting with united force for their common intereſt. The *Lacedemonian* government, formed by Lycurgus in the year of the world 3100—and the *Athenian*, regulated by Solon about the year 3440—will chiefly engage your attention.

In purſuing the *Grecian* chronology, you need only perhaps make one ſtand or Epocha — at the time of *Socrates*, that wiſeſt of philoſophers, whom you muſt have heard of — who lived about 3570 years from the creation, and about 430 before Chriſt: for within the term of 150 years *before* Socrates, and 200 *after* him, will fall in moſt of the great events and illuſtrious characters of the Grecian hiſtory.

I muſt inform you that the Grecian method of dating time was by *Olympiads* — that is four compleat years — ſo call'd from the celebration, every fifth year, of the

Olympic Games, which were cō
teſts in all the manly exerciſe
ſuch as wreſtling — boxing — ru
ning — chariot-racing, &c.—Th
were inſtituted in honour of Ju
ter, and took their name fro
Olympia, a city of Elis, near whi
they were performed: they we
attended by all ranks of peopl
from every ſtate in Greece; t
nobleſt youths were eager to o
tain the prize of victory, whi
was no other than an olive crow
but eſteem'd the moſt diſtinguiſ
ing ornament. Theſe games co
tinued all the time that Greece r
tain'd any ſpark of liberty; a
with them begins the authentic h

tory of that country — all before being conſider'd as fabulous. You muſt therefore endeavour to remember that they began in the year of the world 3228 — after the flood 1570 years—after the deſtruction of Troy 400 — before the building of Rome 23—before Cyrus about 200—and 770 before Chriſt. If you cannot retain *all* theſe dates, at leaſt you muſt not fail to remember the near coincidence of the firſt *Olympiad* with the *building of Rome*, which is of great conſequence, becauſe, as the Grecians reckoned time by Olympiads, the Romans dated from the building of their city; and as theſe two Eras are within 23 years of each other, you may,

for the eaſe of memory, ſuppoſe them to begin together, in the year of the world 3228.

In reading the hiſtory of the *Roman Republic* — which continued in that form of government to the time of Julius Ceſar's dictatorſhip, about the year of the world 3960, and about 48 years before Chriſt — you will make as many epochas as you ſhall find convenient: I will mention only two — the ſacking of Rome by the Gauls, which happen'd in the year of the world 3620 — in the 365th year of the city — in the 97th Olympiad — before Chriſt 385 — and about 30 years

years before the birth of Alexander. The ſecond epocha may be the 608th year of the city — when, after three obſtinate wars, Carthage was deſtroyed, and Rome was left without a rival.

Perhaps the following bad verſes, which were given me when I was young, may help to fix in your mind the important Eras of the Roman and Grecian dates: — You muſt not laugh at them, for chronologers do not pique themſelves on their Poetry, but they make uſe of numbers and rhymes merely as aſſiſtants to memory, being ſo eaſily learn'd by heart.

" Rome and Olympiads bear the
" ſame date,
" Three thouſand two hundred and
" twenty-eight.
" In * three hundred and ſixty
" was Rome ſack'd and torn,
" Thirty ſummers before Alexan-
" der was born."

You will allow that what I have ſaid in theſe few pages is very eaſily learn'd — yet, little as it is, I will venture to ſay that, was you as perfectly miſtreſs of it as of your alphabet, you might anſwer ſeveral queſtions relat-

* That is, in the 365th year of the city.

ing

ing to ancient Chronology more readily than many who pretend to know ſomething of this ſcience. One is not ſo much required to tell the preciſe year, in which a great man lived, as to know with whom he was cotemporary in other parts of the world.—I would know then, from the ſlight ſketch above given, about what year of the Roman republic Alexander the Great lived. —You would quickly run over in your mind, "Alexander lived in "the 3670th year of the world— "330 before Chriſt—conſequently "he muſt have flouriſhed about the "400*th of Rome*, which had en- "dured 750 years when Chriſt

"was

"was born." Or, ſuppoſe it was aſked, what was the condition of Greece, at the time of the ſacking of Rome by the Gauls; had any particular ſtate, or the united body, choſen then to take advantage of the miſfortunes of the Romans?—You conſider that the 365th year of the city—the date of that event—is 385 before Chriſt; conſequently this muſt have happened about the time of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander, when the Grecians under ſuch a leader, might have extirpated the Roman nation from the earth, had they ever heard of them, or thought the conqueſt of them an object worthy their ambition.

Num-

Numberleſs queſtions might be anſwered in like manner, even on this very narrow circumſcribed plan, if it was completely maſtered. I might require that other periods or epochas ſhould be learned with the ſame exactneſs—but theſe may ſerve to explain my meaning, and to ſhew you how practicable and eaſy it is. One thing, however, I muſt obſerve—though perhaps it is ſufficiently obvious—which is, that you can make no uſe of this ſketch of ancient Chronology, nor even hope to retain it, till you have read the ancient *hiſtory*. When you have gone through Rollin's Hiſtoire Ancienne, *once*, then

then will be the time to fix the ancient Chronology deep in your mind, which will very much enhance the pleaſure and uſe of reading it a *ſecond* time; for you muſt remember that nobody reads a hiſtory to much purpoſe, who does not go over it more than once.

When you have got through your courſe of ancient hiſtory, and are come to the more modern, you muſt then have recourſe to the ſecond of the three diviſions — viz. *middle Chronology*; containing about 800 years, from the birth of our Lord, and from within 50 years of the

the riſe of the Roman empire, to Charlemagne, who died in 814.

This period, except in the earlieſt part of it, is too much involved in obſcurity to require a very minute knowledge of its hiſtory — it may be ſufficient to fix two or three of the moſt ſingular circumſtances, by their proper dates.

The firſt epocha to be obſerved is the year of our Lord 330—when Conſtantine, the firſt Chriſtian emperor, who reſtored peace to the oppreſſed and perſecuted church, removed the ſeat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, called afterwards from

from him Conſtantinople. After his time—about the year 400—began thoſe irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, and other northern nations, who ſettled themſelves all over the weſtern parts of the Roman empire, and laid the foundation of the ſeveral ſtates which now ſubſiſt in Europe.

The next epocha is the year 622 —for the eaſe of memory ſay 600 —when Mahomet, by his ſucceſsful impoſture, became the founder of the Saracen empire, which his followers extended over a great part of Aſia and Africa, and over ſome provinces of Europe. — At the

the ſame time, St. Gregory, biſhop of Rome, began to aſſume a ſpiritual power, which grew by degrees into that abſolute and enormous dominion, ſo long maintained by the popes over the greateſt part of Chriſtendom. St. Auguſtine—a miſſionary from St. Gregory—about this time, began the converſion of Great Britain to Chriſtianity.

The third and concluding epocha in this diviſion is the year 800; when Charlemagne, king of France—after having ſubdued the Saxons, repreſſed the Saracens, and eſtabliſhed the temporal dominion of

of the pope by a grant of conſiderable territories — was elected emperor of the weſt and protector of the church. The date of this event correſponds with that remarkable period of our Engliſh hiſtory — the union of the Heptarchy—or ſeven kingdoms — under Egbert.

As to the *third* part of Chronology — namely the *Modern*, I ſhall ſpare you and myſelf all trouble about it at preſent; for, if you follow the courſe of reading which I ſhall recommend, it will be ſome years before you reach modern hiſtory—and, when you do, you will eaſily make periods for yourſelf, if you

you do but remember carefully to examine the dates as you read, and to impreſs on your memory thoſe of very remarkable reigns or events.

I fear you are by this time tired of Chronology; but, my ſole intention in what I have ſaid is to convince you that it is a ſcience not out of your reach, in the moderate degree that is requiſite for you: *the laſt volume of the Ancient Univerſal Hiſtory* is the beſt Engliſh Chronological work I know; if that does not come in your way, there is an excellent French one, called Tablettes Chronologiques de l'Hiſtoire Univerſelle,

Du Freſnoy, 3 tomes, Paris: there is alſo a *chart* of univerſal hiſtory, including Chronology—and a *Biographical* chart—both by Prieſtly—which you may find of ſervice to you.

Indeed, my dear, a woman makes a poor figure who affects, as I have heard ſome ladies do, to diſclaim all knowledge of times and dates: the ſtrange confuſion they make of events, which happened in different periods, and the ſtare of ignorance when ſuch are referred to as are commonly known, are ſufficiently pitiable: but the higheſt mark of folly is to be proud of

ſuch ignorance—a reſource, in which ſome of our ſex find great conſolation.

Adieu, my dear child! — I am, with the tendereſt affection,

ever yours.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR NIECE,

WHEN I recommend to you to gain ſome inſight into the general hiſtory of the world,

perhaps you will think I propoſe a formidable taſk; but, your apprehenſions will vaniſh, when you conſider that of near half the globe we have no hiſtories at all;— that, of other parts of it, a few facts only are known to us—and that, even of thoſe nations, which make the greateſt figure in hiſtory, the early ages are involved in obſcurity and fable: it is not indeed allowable to be totally ignorant even of thoſe fables, becauſe they are the frequent ſubjects of poetry and painting, and are often referred to in more authentic hiſtories.

The firſt recorders of actions are generally poets: in the hiſtorical ſongs

ſongs of the bards are found the only accounts of the firſt ages of every ſtate; but in theſe we muſt naturally expect to find truth mixed with fiction, and often diſguiſed in allegory. In ſuch early times, before ſcience has enlightened the minds of men, the people are ready to believe every thing — and the hiſtorian having no reſtraints from the fear of contradiction or criticiſm, delivers the moſt improbable and abſurd tales as an account of the lives and actions of their forefathers: thus the firſt heroes of every nation are gods, or the ſons of gods; and every great event is accompanied with ſome ſupernatu-

ral agency. Homer, whom I have already mentioned as a poet, you will find the moſt agreeable hiſtorian of the early ages of Greece —and Virgil will ſhew you the ſuppoſed origin of the Carthaginians and Romans.

It will be neceſſary for you to obſerve ſome regular plan in your hiſtorical ſtudies, which can never be purſued with advantage otherwiſe than in a continued ſeries. I do not mean to confine you ſolely to that kind of reading — on the contrary, I wiſh you frequently to relax with poetry or ſome other amuſement, whilſt you are purſuing

ing your courſe of hiſtory; I only mean to warn you againſt mixing *ancient* hiſtory with *modern*, or *general* hiſtories of one place with *particular reigns* in another — by which deſultory manner of reading, many people diſtract and confound their memories, and retain nothing to any purpoſe from ſuch a confuſed maſs of materials.

The moſt ancient of all hiſtories, you will read in your Bible: from thence you will proceed to L'Hiſtoire Ancienne of Rollin, who very ingeniouſly points out the connection of prophane with ſacred hiſtory, and enlivens his nar-

rative with many agreeable and improving reflections — and many very pleaſing detached ſtories and anecdotes, which may ſerve you as reſting places in your journey. It would be an uſeful exerciſe of your memory and judgment, to recount theſe intereſting paſſages to a friend, either by letter or in converſation; not in the words of the author, but in your own natural ſtile — by memory and not by book; and to add whatever remarks may occur to you. I need not ſay that you will pleaſe me much, whenever you are diſpoſed to make this uſe of *me*.

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The want of memory is a great diſcouragement in hiſtorical purſuits, and is what every body complains of. Many artificial helps have been invented, of which, thoſe who have tried them can beſt tell you the effects: but the moſt natural and pleaſant expedient is that of converſation with a friend, who is acquainted with the hiſtory which you are reading. By ſuch converſations, you will find out how much is uſually retained of what is read, and you will learn to ſelect thoſe characters and facts which are beſt worth preſerving: for, it is by trying to remember every thing without diſtinction, that young

young people are ſo apt to loſe every trace of what they read. By repeating to your friend what you can recollect, you will fix it in your memory; and, if you ſhould omit any ſtriking particular, which ought to be retained, that friend will remind you of it, and will direct your attention to it on a ſecond peruſal. It is a good rule, to caſt your eye each day over what you read the day before, and to look over the contents of every book when you have finiſhed it.

Rollin's work takes in a large compaſs — but, of all the ancient nations it treats of, perhaps there are

are only the Grecians and Romans, whoſe ſtories ought to be read with any anxious deſire of retaining them perfectly: for the reſt—ſuch as the Aſſyrians, Egyptians, &c. —I believe, you would find, on examination, that moſt of thoſe, who are ſuppoſed tolerably well read in hiſtory, remember no more than a few of the moſt remarkable facts and characters. I tell you this to prevent your being diſcouraged on finding ſo little remain in your mind after reading theſe leſs intereſting parts of ancient hiſtory.

But, when you come to the Grecian and Roman ſtories, I expect to find

find you deeply intereſted and highly entertained; and of conſequence, eager to treaſure up in your memory thoſe heroic actions and exalted characters, by which a young mind is naturally ſo much animated and impreſſed. As Greece and Rome were diſtinguiſhed as much for genius as valour, and were the theatres, not only of the greateſt military actions — the nobleſt efforts of liberty and patriotiſm — but of the higheſt perfection of arts and ſciences, their immortal fame is a ſubject of wonder and emulation, even to theſe diſtant ages; and, it is thought a ſhameful degree of ignorance, even

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in our ſex, to be unacquainted with the nature and revolutions of their governments, and with the characters and ſtories of their moſt illuſtrious heroes.—Perhaps, when you are told that the government and the national character of your own countrymen have been compared with thoſe of the Romans, it may not be an uſeleſs amuſement, in reading the Roman Hiſtory, to carry this obſervation in your mind, and to examine how far the parallel holds good. The French have been thought to reſemble the Athenians in their genius, though not in their love of liberty. Theſe little hints ſometimes ſerve to awaken

ken reflection and attention in young readers—I leave you to make what uſe of them you pleaſe.

When you have got through Rollin, if you add *Vertot's Revolutions Romaines*—a ſhort, and very entertaining work—you may be ſaid to have read as much as is *abſolutely neceſſary* of ancient hiſtory. Plutarch's Lives of famous Greeks and Romans—a book deſervedly of the higheſt reputation—can never be read to ſo much advantage as immediately after the hiſtories of Greece and Rome: I ſhould even prefer reading each life in Plutarch, immediately after the hiſtory of each parti-

particular Hero, as you meet with them in Rollin or in Vertot.

If hereafter you ſhould chooſe to enlarge your plan, and ſhould wiſh to know more of any particular people or period than you find in Rollin, the ſources from which he drew may be open to you—for there are, I believe, French or Engliſh tranſlations of all the original hiſtorians, from whom he extracted his materials.

Crevier's continuation of Rollin, I believe, gives the beſt account of the Roman emperors down to Conſtantine. What ſhocking inſtances, will

will you there meet with, of the terrible effects of lawleſs power on the human mind!—How will you be amazed to ſee the moſt promiſing characters changed by flattery and ſelf-indulgence into monſters that diſgrace humanity!—to read a ſeries of ſuch lives as thoſe of Tiberius, Nero, or Domitian, would be intolerable, were we not conſoled by the view of thoſe excellent emperors, who remained uncorrupted through all temptations. When the mind — diſguſted, depreſſed, and terrified — turns from the contemplation of thoſe depths of vice, to which the human nature may be ſunk, a Titus, the delight

of mankind—a Trajan—an Antoninus—reſtore it to an exulting ſenſe of the dignity, to which that nature may be exalted by virtue. Nothing is more awful than this conſideration: a human creature given up to vice is infinitely below the moſt abject brute: the ſame creature, trained by virtue to the utmoſt perfection of his nature, is "but a little lower than the angels, "and is crowned with glory and "immortality."

Before you enter upon the modern hiſtory of any particular kingdom, it will be proper to gain ſome idea of that interval between an-

cient and modern times, which is juſtly called the dark and barbarous ages — and which laſted from Conſtantine to Charlemagne — perhaps one might ſay to ſome centuries after. On the irruption of the northern Barbarians, who broke the Roman empire, and diſſipated all the treaſures of knowledge, as well as of riches, which had been ſo long accumulating in that enormous ſtate, the European world may be ſaid to have returned to a ſecond infancy; and the Monkiſh legends, which are the only records preſerved of the times in which they were written, are not leſs fabulous than the tales of the demi-gods.

I muſt

I muſt profeſs myſelf ignorant how to direct you to any diſtinct or amuſing knowledge of the hiſtory of Europe during this period: — ſome collect it from *Puffendorf's Introduction* — ſome from *The Univerſal Hiſtory* — and now, perhaps, with more advantage and delight, from the firſt volume of *Robertſon's Charles the Fifth*, in which he traces the progreſs of civilization, government, and arts, from the firſt ſettlements of the Barbarians; and ſhews the foundation of the ſeveral ſtates, into which Europe is now divided, and of thoſe laws, cuſtoms, and politics, which prevail in this quarter of the world.

In theſe dark ages, you will find no ſingle character ſo intereſting as that of Mahomet—that bold impoſtor, who extended his uſurped dominion equally over the minds and properties of men, and propagated a new religion, whilſt he founded a new empire, over a large portion of the globe. His life has been written by various hands.

When you come to the particular hiſtories of the European ſtates, your own country ſeems to demand the precedence; and, there is no part more commodious to ſet out from, ſince you cannot learn the hiſtory of Great Britain, without becoming in ſome

ſome degree acquainted with almoſt every neighbouring nation, and without finding your curioſity excited to know more of thoſe, with whom we are moſt connected.

By the amazing progreſs of navigation and commerce, within the laſt two or three centuries, all parts of the world are now connected: the moſt diſtant people are become well acquainted, who, for thouſands of years, never heard of one another's exiſtence: we are ſtill every day exploring new regions—and every day ſee greater reaſon to expect that immenſe countries may

yet be diſcovered, and America no longer retain the name of the *New World.* You may paſs to every quarter of the earth, and find yourſelf ſtill in the Britiſh dominion; this iſland, in which we live, is the leaſt portion of it; and, if we were to adopt the ſtile of ancient conquerors, we might call it the throne, from which we rule the world. To this boaſt we are better entitled than ſome of thoſe who formerly called themſelves *Maſters of the Globe*, as we poſſeſs an empire of greater extent, and, from the ſuperior advantages of our commerce, much greater power and riches;—but, we have now too many rivals

in

in dominion, to take upon us ſuch haughty titles.

You cannot be ſaid to know the hiſtory of that empire, of which you are ſubject, without knowing ſomething of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, where ſo great a part of it is ſituated: and you will find the accounts of the diſcovery and conqueſt of America very entertaining, tho' you will be ſhocked at the injuſtice and cruelty of its conquerors. But, with which of the glorious conquerors of mankind muſt not humanity be ſhocked! — Ambition, the moſt remorſeleſs of all paſſions, purſues its object by all ſorts of means:

juſtice, mercy, truth, and every thing moſt ſacred, in vain oppoſe its progreſs! — alas, my dear, ſhall I venture to tell you that the hiſtory of the world is little elſe than a ſhocking account of the wickedneſs and folly of the ambitious! — The world has ever been, and, I ſuppoſe, ever muſt be, governed and inſulted by theſe aſpiring ſpirits—it has always, in a greater or leſs degree, groaned under their unjuſt uſurpation.

But let not the horror of ſuch a ſcene put a ſtop to your curioſity: it is proper you ſhould know mankind as they are: You muſt be acquainted

acquainted with the heroes of the earth, and perhaps you may be too well reconciled to them: Mankind have in general a ſtrong bias in their favour; we ſee them ſurrounded with pomp and ſplendour — every thing that relates to them has an air of grandeur — and, whilſt we admire their natural powers, we are too apt to pardon the deteſtable abuſe of them, to the injury and ruin of the human race. We are dazzled with falſe glory, and willingly give into the deluſion; — for mighty conqueſts, like great conflagrations, have ſomething of the ſublime that pleaſes the imagination, though we know, if we reflect

fleƈt at all, that the conſequences of them are devaſtation and miſery.

The Weſtern and Eaſtern world will preſent to you very different proſpeƈts. In *America*, the firſt European conquerors found nature in great ſimplicity; ſociety ſtill in its infancy—and conſequently the arts and ſciences yet unknown: ſo that the facility, with which they overpowered theſe poor innocent people, was entirely owing to their ſuperior knowledge in the arts of deſtroying. They found the inhabitants brave enthuſiaſtic patriots, but without either the military or poli-

tical arts neceſſary for their defence. The two great kingdoms of Mexico and Peru had alone made ſome progreſs in civilization; they were both formed into regular ſtates, and had gained ſome order and diſcipline: from theſe therefore the Spaniards met with ſomething like an oppoſition. At firſt indeed the invaders appeared ſupernatural beings, who came upon them flying over the ocean, on the wings of the wind, and who, mounted on fiery animals, unknown in that country, attacked them with thunder and lightning in their hands—for ſuch the fire-arms of the Spaniards appeared

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But, from being worſhipped as g
they ſoon came to be feared as
ſpirits; and in time being diſc
ed to be men — different from
Americans only in their outrag
injuſtice, and in the cruel art
deſtroying—they were abhorred
boldly oppoſed. The reſiſt
however of a million of theſe
naked people, deſperately crou
on each other to deſtruction, ſe
only to make their ruin more
plete. The Europeans have
ſtroyed, with the moſt ſhoc
barbarity, many millions of the
ginal inhabitants of theſe coun

and have ever ſince been depopulating Europe and Africa to ſupply their places.

Though our own countrymen have no reaſon to boaſt of the juſtice and humanity of their proceedings in America, yet, in compariſon with thoſe of the Spaniards, our poſſeſſions there were innocently acquired. Some of them were gained by conqueſt, or ceſſion, from Spain and from other European powers—Some by contract with the natives, or by ſettlements on uninhabited lands. We are now poſſeſſed of a ſeries of colonies, extending

tending above two thouſand mile along the whole Eaſtern coaſt o North America, beſides man iſlands of immenſe value. The countries, inſtead of being thinl peopled by a few hords of ignoran ſavages, are now adorned wit many great cities, and innumerabl rich plantations, which have mad ample returns to their mother cou try, for the dangers and expenc which attended their firſt eſtabliſ ment. Bleſt with more natural a vantages than almoſt any countr in the world, they are making ſwift progreſs in wealth and gran deur, and ſeem likely, in ſome fu

ture period, to be as much the ſeat of empire and of ſcience as Europe is at preſent. Whether their attainments in virtue and happineſs will keep pace with their advancement in knowledge, wealth, and power, is much to be queſtioned; for you will obſerve, in your hiſtorical view of the ſeveral great empires of the world, that as each grew up towards the higheſt pitch of greatneſs, the ſeeds of deſtruction grew up with it; luxury and vice, by debaſing the minds, and enervating the bodies of the people, left them all, in their turns, an eaſy prey to poorer and more valiant nations.

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In the Eaſt, the Europeans introduced themſelves in a milder way: admitted firſt as traders—and, for the more commodious carrying on their commerce, indulged by the powers of the country, in eſtabliſhing a few ſmall factories — they by gentle degrees extended and ſtrengthened their ſettlements there, till their force became conſiderable enough to be thought an uſeful auxiliary to contending princes; and — as it has often happened to thoſe who have called in foreign powers to interfere in their domeſtic contentions—by availing themſelves of the diſturbances of a diſmembered monarchy, they at length raiſed

raiſed a power, almoſt independant of their employers. Soon, the ſeveral European nations, who had thus got footing in the Indies, jealous of each other's growing greatneſs, made the feuds of the native princes ſubſervient to their mutual conteſts — till within a few years, the Engliſh, by a happy concurrence of circumſtances, obtained the maſtery, and expelled their rivals from all their conſiderable ſettlements.

The rapidity of our conqueſts here has been perhaps equal to that of the firſt invaders of America — but from different cauſes. Here we found an old eſtabliſh'd

empire advanced to its criſis; the magnificence and luxury of the great carried to the higheſt exceſs—and the people in a proportionable degree of oppreſſion and debaſement. Thus ripe for deſtruction, the rivalſhips of the vice-roys, from the weakneſs of the government, become independant ſovereigns—and the daſtardly ſpirit of the meaner people—indifferent to the cauſe for which they were compelled to fight—encouraged theſe ambitious merchants to puſh their advantages farther than they could at firſt have ſuppoſed poſſible: with aſtoniſhment they ſaw the intrepid leaders of a few hundreds of brave free Britons boldly

oppoſe

oppoſe and repeatedly put to flight millions of theſe effeminate Indian ſlaves — and, in a ſhort time, raiſe for them an empire much larger than their Mother Country.

From theſe remote quarters of the world, let us now return to Great Britain, with the hiſtory of which, you ought certainly to acquaint yourſelf, before you enter upon that of any other European kingdom. If you have courage and induſtry enough to begin ſo high as the invaſion of Julius Cæſar — before which nothing is known of the inhabitants of this iſland — you may ſet out with Rapin, and proceed with him to Wil-

liam the Conqueror. From this era there are other hiſtories of England more entertaining than his, tho', I believe, none eſteemed more authentic. Party ſo ſtrongly influences both hiſtorians and their readers, that it is a difficult and invidious taſk to point out the *beſt* amongſt the number of Engliſh hiſtories that offer themſelves: but, as *you* will not read with a critical view, nor enter deeply into politics, I think you may be allow'd to chooſe that which is moſt entertaining; and, in this view, I believe the general voice will direct you to Hume, tho' he goes no farther than the Revolution. Among other *hiſtorians*, do

not forget my darling *Shakeſpear* — a faithful as well as a moſt agreeable one—whoſe hiſtorical plays, if read in a ſeries, will fix in your memory the reigns he has choſen, more durably than any other hiſtory. You need not fear his leading you into any material miſtakes, for he keeps ſurprizingly cloſe to the truth, as well in the characters as in the events. One cannot but wiſh he had given us a play on the reign of every Engliſh King — as it would have been the pleaſanteſt, and perhaps the moſt uſeful way of becoming acquainted with it.

For the other portion of Great

Britain, Robertſon's Hiſtory of Scotland is a delightful work, and of a moderate ſize.

Next to your own country, *France* will be the moſt intereſting object of your enquiries; our ancient poſſeſſions in that country, and the frequent conteſts we have been engaged in with its inhabitants, connect their hiſtory with our own. The extent of their dominion and influence — their ſuppoſed ſuperiority in elegance and politeneſs — their eminence in the Arts and Sciences — and that intercourſe of thought, if I may ſo call it, which ſubſiſts between us, by the mutual communication of liter-

literary productions — make them peculiarly intereſting to us; and we cannot but find our curioſity excited to know their ſtory, and to be intimately acquainted with the character, genius, and ſentiments of this nation.

I do not know of any general hiſtory of France that will anſwer your purpoſe except that of *Mezerai*, which, even in the abridgement, is a pretty large work; there is a very modern one by *Velly, and others*, which perhaps may be more lively, but is ſtill more voluminous, and not yet compleated. From Mezerai, you

may proceed with Voltaire to the end of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth.

In conſidering the reſt of Europe, your curioſity may be confined within narrower limits. Modern hiſtory is, from the nature of it, much more minute and laborious than the ancient — and to purſue that of ſo many various kingdoms and governments would be a taſk unequal to your leiſure and abilities, at leaſt for ſeveral years to come; at the ſame time, it muſt be owned that the preſent ſyſtem of politics and commerce has formed ſuch a relation between the different powers of Europe, that they

they are in a manner members of one great body, and a total ignorance of any conſiderable ſtate would throw an obſcurity even upon the affairs of your own country: an acquaintance however with the moſt remarkable circumſtances, that diſtinguiſh the principal governments, will ſufficiently enlighten you, and will enable you to comprehend, whatever relates to them, in the hiſtories with which you are more familiar. Inſtead of referring you for this purpoſe to dull and unintereſting abridgements, I chooſe rather to point out to you a few ſmall Tracts, which exhibit ſtriking and lively pictures, not

eaſily

eaſily effaced from the memory, of the conſtitutions and the moſt remarkable tranſactions of ſeveral of theſe nations. Such are

Sir William Temple's Eſſay on the United Provinces.

His Eſſay on Heroic Virtue, which contains ſome account of the Saracen Empire.

Vertot's Revolutions de Suede.

——————— de Portugal.

Voltaire's Charles 12 de Suede.

——————— Pierre le Grand.

Puffendorf's Account of the Popes, in his Introduction to Modern Hiſtory.

Some part of the Hiſtory of

Germany and Spain, you will ſee more in detail in Robertſon's Hiſtory of Charles the Vth, which I have already recommended to you, in another view.

After all this, you may ſtill be at a loſs for the tranſactions of Europe, in the laſt fifty years; for the purpoſe of giving you, in a very ſmall compaſs, ſome idea of the ſtate of affairs during that period, I will venture to recommend one book more — *Campbell's State of Europe.*

Thus much may ſuffice for that moderate ſcheme, which I think is beſt ſuited to your ſex and age. There are ſeveral excellent hiſto-

ries,

ries, and memoirs of particular reigns and periods, which I have taken no notice of in this circumſcribed plan — but, with which, if you ſhould happen to have a taſte for the ſtudy, you will hereafter chooſe to be acquainted: theſe will be read with moſt advantage, after you have gained ſome general view of hiſtory — and they will then ſerve to refreſh your memory, and ſettle your ideas diſtinctly, as well as enable you to compare different accounts of the perſons and facts which they treat of, and to form your opinions of them on juſt grounds.

As I cannot, with certainty, foreſee what degree of application or genius

genius for ſuch purſuits you will be miſtreſs of, I ſhall leave the deficiencies of this collection to be ſupplied by the ſuggeſtions of your more informed friends — who, if you explain to them how far you wiſh to extend your knowledge, will direct you to the proper books.

But if, inſtead of an eager deſire for this kind of knowledge, you ſhould happen to feel that diſtaſte for it, which is too common in young ladies, who have been indulged in reading only works of mere amuſement, you will perhaps rather think that I want mercy in offering you ſo large a plan, than that there needs an apology

for

for the deficiencies of it: but, comfort yourſelf with the aſſurance that a taſte for hiſtory will grow and improve by reading: that as you get acquainted with one period or nation, your curioſity cannot fail to be awakened for what concerns thoſe immediately connected with it; and thus, you will inſenſibly be led on, from one degree of knowledge to another.

If you waſte in trivial amuſement the next three or four years of your life, which are the prime ſeaſon of improvement, believe me, you will hereafter bitterly regret their loſs: when you come to feel yourſelf inferior in knowledge to almoſt every one

one you converſe with—and, above all, if you ſhould ever be a mother, when you feel your own inability to direct and aſſiſt the purſuits of your children — you will then find ignorance a ſevere mortification and a real evil. Let this, my dear, animate your induſtry — and let not a modeſt opinion of your own capacity be a diſcouragement to your endeavours after knowledge; a moderate underſtanding, with diligent and well directed application, will go much farther than a more lively genius, if attended with that impatience and inattention, which too often accompanies quick parts. It is not from want of capacity that ſo many

women are ſuch trifling inſipid companions — ſo ill qualified for the friendſhip and converſation of a ſenſible man — or for the taſk of governing and inſtructing a family; it is much oftener from the neglect of exerciſing the talents, which they really have, and from omitting to cultivate a taſte for intellectual improvement: by this neglect, they loſe the ſincereſt of pleaſures; a pleaſure, which would remain when almoſt every other forſakes them — which neither fortune nor age can deprive them of — and which would be a comfort and reſource in almoſt every poſſible ſituation of life.

If I can but inſpire you, my dear child, with the deſire of making the moſt of your time and abilities, my end is anſwered; the means of knowledge will eaſily be found by thoſe who diligently ſeek them — and they will find their labours abundantly rewarded.

And now, my dear, I think it is time to finiſh this long correſpondence — which, though in ſome parts it may have been tedious to you, will not, I hope, be found entirely uſeleſs in any. I have laid before you all that my matureſt reflections could enable me to ſuggeſt, for the direction of your conduct

through life. My love for you, my deareſt child, extends its views beyond this frail and tranſitory exiſtence; it conſiders you as a candidate for immortality—as entering the liſts for the prize of your high calling—as contending for a crown of unfading glory. It ſees, with anxious ſolicitude, the dangers that ſurround you, and the everlaſting ſhame that muſt follow, if you do not exert all your ſtrength in the conflict. Religion therefore has been the baſis of my plan — the principle, to which every other purſuit is ultimately referred. Here then I have endeavoured to guide your reſearches; and to aſſiſt you

in

in forming juſt notions on a ſubject of ſuch infinite importance, I have ſhewn you the neceſſity of regulating your heart and temper, according to the genuine ſpirit of that religion, which I have ſo earneſtly recommended as the great rule of your life. To the ſame principle, I would refer your attention to domeſtic duties—and, even that refinement and elegance of manners, and all thoſe graces and accompliſhments, which will ſet your virtues in the faireſt light, and will engage the affection and reſpect of all who converſe with you. — Endeared to Society by theſe amiable qualities, your influence

in it will be more extenſive, and your capacity of being uſeful proportionably enlarged. The ſtudies, which I have recommended to you, muſt be likewiſe ſubſervient to the ſame views; the purſuit of knowledge, when it is guided and controul'd by the principles I have eſtabliſh'd, will conduce to many valuable ends: the habit of induſtry, it will give you — the nobler kind of friendſhips, for which it will qualify you, and its tendency to promote a candid and liberal way of thinking, are obvious advantages. I might add, that a mind well informed in the various purſuits which intereſt mankind and the influence

influence of ſuch purſuits on their happineſs, will embrace, with a clearer choice, and will more ſteadily adhere to, thoſe principles of Virtue and Religion, which the judgment muſt ever approve, in proportion as it becomes enlighten'd.

May thoſe delightful hopes be anſwered which have animated my heart, while with diligent attention I have endeavoured to apply to your advantage all that my own experience and beſt obſervation could furniſh. With what joy ſhould I ſee my deareſt girl ſhine forth a bright example of every thing that is amiable and praiſe-

worthy!

worthy! — and how ſweet would be the reflection that I had, in any degree, contributed to make her ſo! — My heart expands with the affecting thought, and pours forth in this adieu the moſt ardent wiſhes for your perfection! — If the tender ſolicitude expreſs'd for your welfare by this "labour of love" can engage your gratitude, you will always remember how deeply your conduct intereſts the happineſs of

Your moſt affectionate Aunt.

THE END.

